

Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



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WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, February 25, 2005

Memorandum on Assignment of Reporting Function

February 17, 2005

Memorandum for the Director of the National Science Foundation

Subject: Assignment of Reporting Function

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, I hereby assign to you the functions conferred upon the President by Public Law 98-373 (15 U.S.C. 4107(b) and 4108(a)), to provide the specified report and plan to the Congress.

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 18. An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Memorandum on Assignment of Certain Functions Relating to Climate Change Reporting Activities

February 18, 2005

Memorandum for the Director of the Office of Management and Budget

Subject: Assignment of Certain Functions Relating to Climate Change Reporting Activities

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, I hereby assign to you the function of the President under section 576(b) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2005 (Division D of Public Law

108-447). Heads of departments and agencies shall furnish promptly to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, to the extent permitted by law, information the Director requests to perform such function.

Any reference in this memorandum to the provision of any Act shall be deemed to include references to any hereafter enacted provision of law that is the same or substantially the same as such provision.

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Notice—Continuation of the National Emergency Relating to Cuba and the Emergency Authority Relating to the Regulation of the Anchorage and Movement of Vessels

February 18, 2005

On March 1, 1996, by Proclamation 6867, a national emergency was declared to address the disturbance or threatened disturbance of international relations caused by the February 24, 1996, destruction by the Cuban government of two unarmed U.S.-registered civilian aircraft in international airspace north of Cuba. In July 1996 and on subsequent occasions, the Cuban government stated its intent to forcefully defend its sovereignty against any U.S.-registered vessels or aircraft that might enter Cuban territorial waters or airspace while involved in a flotilla or peaceful protest. Since these events, the Cuban government has not demonstrated that it will refrain from the future use of reckless and excessive force against U.S. vessels

or aircraft that may engage in memorial activities or peaceful protest north of Cuba. On February 26, 2004, by Proclamation 7757, the scope of the national emergency was expanded in order to deny monetary and material support to the repressive Cuban government, which had taken a series of steps to destabilize relations with the United States, including threatening to abrogate the Migration Accords with the United States and to close the United States Interests Section. Further, Cuba's most senior officials repeatedly asserted that the United States intended to invade Cuba, despite explicit denials from the U.S. Secretaries of State and Defense that such action is planned. Therefore, in accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing the national emergency with respect to Cuba and the emergency authority relating to the regulation of the anchorage and movement of vessels set out in Proclamation 6867 as amended and expanded by Proclamation 7757.

This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

George W. Bush

The White House,
February 18, 2005.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., February 23, 2005]

NOTE: This notice was published in the *Federal Register* on February 24. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency Relating to Cuba and the Emergency Authority Relating to the Regulation of the Anchorage and Movement of Vessels

February 18, 2005

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date

of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the Federal Register for publication, which states that the emergency declared with respect to the Government of Cuba's destruction of two unarmed U.S.-registered civilian aircraft in international airspace north of Cuba on February 24, 1996, as amended and expanded on February 26, 2004, is to continue in effect beyond March 1, 2005.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Interview With European Print Journalists

February 18, 2005

The President. Let me give a couple of opening comments, and we'll do a couple rounds of questions.

First, I'm—you know, I said in my press conference yesterday, for a period of time, we have a tendency in Europe and in America to talk past each other. In other words, September the 11th for some was obviously an important moment, but it passed. For us, it changed our way of thinking. It changed our foreign policy. It caused me, as the President, and people in my administration to have an intense focus on securing our country. And I say "talk past" because when you have a different view about priority, it creates a—it's missed opportunity, is the best way to put it.

So my trip to Europe, with that in mind, is to seize the moment and invigorate a relationship that is a vital relationship for our own security as well as a vital relationship for long-term peace in the world. We compete at times, but we don't compete when it comes to values, and that's a very important

part of my message, is that we share a belief in human rights and human dignity and rule of law and transparency of government and democracy and freedom. And those are vital values necessary to not only secure our own countries but necessary to do our duty, which is to work together to help people live in freedom. If freedom is good enough for us, why isn't it good enough for others?

So I'm looking forward to it. It's a full schedule, and I'm going to, obviously, start in Belgium and see the Belgium leaders as well as give a speech that I think will set the tone for the trip—and in the speech, by the way, talk about a variety of areas where we can work together, talk about the greater Middle East, Middle Eastern peace and Iraq and Iran, talk about the need for us to work together to feed the hungry and take care of the diseased. I'll talk about the environment. I'll talk about a variety of different areas where we can cooperate to make the world a better place.

And then, of course, NATO—in my view, NATO is a vital relationship. It's an essential relationship for peace and security. It's an important relationship for the United States and Canada, for this part of the world to work with European partners to come up with ways to secure the peace.

I'm looking forward to meeting with the EU and then off to Germany and then the Slovak Republic. And I'm excited about the trip, looking forward to it.

Andrei [Andrei K. Sitov, *Rossiskaya Gazeta*/ITAR-TASS], you want to—Philippe [Philippe Gelie, *Le Figaro*], however you want to do it. Who's the oldest person? Philippe, you start, and we'll go this way.

Q. Okay.

The President. Andrei, I'll give you a chance to collect your thoughts. I know you're nervous. [*Laughter*]

Q. I am. I don't hide it. [*Laughter*]

The President. No, you're not; you're never nervous. If you are nervous, don't let them know it, particularly the wire services behind you.

Q. I'll try.

France-U.S. Relations

Q. Well, since President Chirac comes almost first on the program, Mr. President, do

you think nice words of reconciliation will be—what would it take to really overcome the bitterness and the mutual reproach of the last few years?

The President. Obviously, nice words are nice, but deeds are more important than words. I, personally, don't feel bitter. You can say "the bitter"—or whatever you phrase it—you used the phrase "bitter"—

Q. Bitterness and recrimination.

The President. Bitterness and recrimination. I don't feel bitter, personally. And so it's easy to have a conversation with somebody to overcome bitterness if you don't feel bitter.

Secondly, I fully understand that the world kind of watches French-U.S. relationships and draws conclusions from that and says, "Well, if the United States and France don't get along," and therefore, there's great splits. I'm regretful about that because I don't view the United States as being split from Europe. I know we had a difference of opinion. And it was a big difference of opinion on Iraq.

But now is the time for us to set aside that difference and to move forward in areas where we can work together. Interesting enough, during this period of time, we worked together in Haiti and in Afghanistan. And now we have a great opportunity to advance democracy in the greater Middle East, in Lebanon. This is an area of mutual concern. I can remember when I was in Paris, President Chirac brought up the idea of a Security Council resolution to say to the Syrians, "Get your troops out of Lebanon." And in 1559, that became a reality, a resolution sponsored by France and the United States.

My point is, is that we can work together and will work together. So the deeds that I think the world will see is France and the United States making common cause for democracy and freedom. The words will be nice, and I'm now confident that the deeds will be easy for people to see and will, more importantly, make a significant contribution to peace and freedom. France is a great country, and a lot of people in our country, obviously, were concerned about the French decision about Iraq. They felt our security was threatened. Nevertheless, they still have great—there's great affection for the French

culture, the French countryside, and the French people.

Alec [Alec Russell, Daily Telegraph].

European Union

Q. Mr. President, one of the striking moments of your trip is your visit to the European Commission. As you know, sir, for many in Europe, many in the EU who are keen to see the EU become something of a counterbalance to America and—powers. As the leader of the Nation that sets much store by its Constitution—unlike, I should add, my nation, which doesn't have a constitution—

The President. Thank you, Alec. [Laughter]

Q. —I wonder what your view is of the proposed EU constitution?

The President. You know, look, we want the EU to be successful. The European Union is a significant partner in many things, particularly trade. It is a—I think it's a great opportunity for the United States and for the people of Europe—the people of the United States and the people of Europe to benefit from mutually beneficial trade relationships. And the trade is fairly balanced, if I recall. It's like a trillion a year, both sides. So, therefore, the more that the EU is able to affect commerce and trade and the movement of money and goods and labor across borders to help it become an effective—a more effective commercial trading partner, the more it benefits America.

I remind people a lot that it took us a while to get our democracy going. An interesting book, for example, is—read the book on Alexander Hamilton by Chernow. I'll think you find it interesting. It goes to show how hard it was to get a federalist system in place that was balanced and fair.

I'm not drawing an exact parallel, obviously, between what's going on between European states and trying to come up with an overarching system that is fair and, at the same time, honor the integrity and sovereignty of the countries involved. But it is a hard task. And every time I meet with the European leaders, I ask them how it's going, because I'm fascinated by the political integration and is it possible. But I'm also wise enough not to comment about the European

constitution since I don't have anything to do about it. It's kind of a long answer to say, "No, I'm not going to comment." [Laughter]

I've always been fascinated to see how the British culture and the French culture and the sovereignty of the nations, longstanding traditional sovereignty, can be integrated into a larger whole in a modern era. And progress is being made, and I'm hopeful it works, because I think it's—if you say, we are united by alliance, by values in our alliance, therefore one should not fear a strong partner. One should welcome a strong partner, because the values are long lasting and will endure.

Klaus [Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung].

Q. Mr. President, first, thank you very much for having us this morning.

The President. Thanks for coming.

Germany-U.S. Relations

Q. After a stretch in the German-America relationship some people called "poisoned," you are going to visit the city of Mainz. The city of Mainz was used by your father 16 years ago as a venue to promote Germany as a partner in leadership. This seems ages ago.

The President. Yes, it does. [Laughter]

Q. What do you hope to gain from this visit? What are your expectations in Germany? And how do you see this relationship? This has become somewhat complicated—

The President. Well, again, very much like our relations with the French. Much of the world views relations through the prism of the Iraq decision, overlooking areas of cooperation. You know, we spent—again, with France and, of course, Great Britain and Germany, we've spent a lot of time sharing some intelligence and some recent arrests by German authorities of Al Qaida operatives, for example. That tends to get overlooked. The French have got a great security network. The Brits are obviously very good about cooperating all together, in order to deal with the movement of terrorists and money and finance.

The PRTs, the German PRTs in Afghanistan are a significant contribution to the advancement of democracy there. And by the way, which wasn't an easy decision by some

because there was—in some quarters, there was an attitude that, you know, Afghan couldn't be free. You know, "These are backward people." You know, "Democracy isn't meant for them. Deep in their souls there's not this great longing for freedom, and therefore, let's not be very hopeful about what happened."

And sure enough, millions showed up, but Germany was there ahead of time. I mean, Germany was—there was a great, sort of, faith that everybody wants to be free. And the reason I bring that up, that is an important understanding when it comes to taking on the big goals of establishing peace through the advancement of liberty.

Again, very much like the relations that are viewed to be, you know, not perfect—this will be an opportunity to send a message that I'm giving you now that there's much more that unites us than divides us. And we want good relations. Listen, German-American relations are long standing and very important, and like any relationship, there is ups and downs. My attitude is, is that now is the opportunity to tackle common issues.

Iran is a common issue. And it should be interesting to the world to see that the three nations that are directly involved with the Iranians—sending the Iranians the universal message that "we will not have a nuclear weapon," is France, Great Britain, and Germany. And the United States is very pleased to be a party with you, in encouraging you to carry that message. It shows we've got faith in our friends, and we share a common value and the common goal. And the goal is two things: One, state-sponsored terror must end if there's going to be peace; and secondly, to make sure that the Iranians do not have a nuclear weapon.

But there are areas I'm looking forward to talking about. I mentioned Lebanon and Syria, of course Iran, and the issue that tends to really focus Europe in that part of the world is the Arab-Israeli—I mean, the Palestinian-Israeli potential peace. And I must address that head-on. I've talked about it to Gerhard. He's very interested in the subject. Jacques Chirac, of course, is very interested. Tony Blair is very interested.

This subject always comes up when I talk to these leaders. They recognize the United

States has a role to play, and I recognize Europe has a role to play. And the first significant role that Europe will be playing, beyond just helping—working to keep the process going, is the March 1st London conference, which is an opportunity for the Palestinians to hear from the world that we—that there will be help for you to build a democratic—the institutions necessary for a democratic state to emerge.

My own judgment is there will never be longstanding peace until the Palestinians become a democracy. And I look forward to working with the European leaders to see that be the case. And it's happening. Things are happening. In my State of the Union Address—and I'll remind this in my speech in Belgium, that peace is within reach, I said. It's within reach, and I believe that. I wouldn't have said it if it didn't believe it. And if you believe it's within reach, it will provide opportunity for all of us to focus on how to get there.

And Abbas has shown some courage. In order to achieve peace, you have to show courage, and he has. And Israel is working hard to keep the process going. The Palestinian elections, which I viewed as a vital moment for Abbas—nothing like being endorsed by the people to kind of reinvigorate the soul. The Israelis helped to have these—the Israelis helped ensure the elections were as open as possible, and that was a vital contribution.

Anyway, I'm kind of rambling here. But the point is, there's a lot we can discuss. We can discuss hunger. We can discuss poverty. We can discuss disease. We can discuss all kinds of issues, and the march of freedom as well. And there's a lot of common ground that we can work together on, and that's what this visit is intended to say to the world.

Matus [Matus Kostolny, SME].

President's Upcoming Visit to Slovakia/ Meeting With Russian President Putin

Q. Why did you choose Bratislava as the last stop of your trip? Why did you choose to meet President Putin there?

The President. Yes, good question. First, I told your Prime Minister that—I can't remember how it worked—we were in the Oval Office. Either he said, "When are you

coming?" Or I said, "When are you going to invite me?" [Laughter] I can't remember exactly. However it plays best for him, put it in your newspaper that way. [Laughter]

We have had a—I suspect it is because he said, "When are you coming?" And I think it's very important to go to the Slovak Republic to say to the people, "Congratulations for doing the hard work of democracy and freedom." And I'm going to meet with freedom fighters, heroes of democracy. It's also important to—and so, one, I'm going because I like your leadership. Two, I'm going because I like your story. And three, I'm going because I want others to see what's possible, to see a country emerge and grow and become confident and strong. And President Putin is coming there because he said he wanted to meet me in Europe. And I said, "If the Government is willing to let us both meet there, it's the perfect place to meet."

And so I'm looking forward to it. I want to thank the Government and the people for not only hosting me and my wife but also hosting what will be an important meeting with the Government and eventually—and ultimately, meeting with Vladimir Putin there. I'm looking forward to it. I'm sorry it's not a little warmer, because the Prime Minister keeps continually urging me to run with him. He's a great runner. I'm injured, however. I'd ride my mountain bike with him.

Yes, sir. Andrei. Have you had your nerves calmed down by now?

Q. Thank you, sir. They've come back and left a few times.

The President. Okay, good.

Q. As you just said, you will be meeting President Putin for the 12th time now. You know him pretty well.

The President. How many?

Q. Twelve times. That was the Russian side calculation. [Laughter] I don't know if figures computes.

The President. Yes, it feels like 12, for him. That's right. [Laughter]

Q. Anyway, you know each other pretty well by now—

The President. Yes, I do.

Q. But at the same time, you are in the second terms, both of you. So for you, this meeting, this coming meeting, when you look

at it, do you regard it as sort of a followup on what's been going on up until now? Or is it an opportunity to maybe make it a fresh start for the second term?

The President. I view it as a, on a personal level, a followup. We don't need a fresh start for a personal relationship. I'll take your word for it; we've met 12 times. And then it will be 13 in May, by the way. And during those previous—this will be the 12th meeting, so the 11 meetings prior to this, we've gotten to know each other. And I think that is an important part of developing relationships. It's a way to have a relationship—it's a way of putting a relationship in a position where you can be frank with somebody. If you disagree with him, you tell him you disagree with him.

And I think that's a vital part of my relationship with Vladimir. There is still some distrust between the countries but not at the leadership level. In other words, I think he feels there are some people in our Government that are anti-Soviet, that have an anti-Soviet bias, and therefore, hold it against Russia. And I think there are some in our Government who feels like that—that there's a—the information he gets is not as accurate about American views. And so, therefore, it's very important to have a personal relationship to be able to help our Governments better understand each other.

Vladimir has made some decisions that I look forward to hearing, in a very private way—you know, why he made the decisions he made. One of the interesting things about leadership is that you get to make decisions. As a matter of fact, the most—people say, "What is your job description?" My job description is, make decisions. And I make a lot of them. And therefore, it's an interesting opportunity, Andrei, to talk to a fellow decisionmaker about why you make decisions, what is the rationale; "Tell me why you do this or that or the other." And I look forward to that aspect of it.

We've got a strategic framework in place that is set. I think it's—that is at all levels of Government, through the energy ministries and the proliferation ministries—and Hadley has been in charge of that, by the way. And so now that he's got a new position, perhaps it would be an opportunity for him

to reinvigorate the strategic dialog. And so to a certain extent, there's a chance to kind of renew a commitment to this strategic dialog.

And I'm looking forward to it, looking forward to coming to St. Petersburg—or to Moscow, I guess it is, Moscow—in May, right?

Q. Right.

The President. Sixtieth anniversary for the end of the Russian theater in World War II. That's going to be good.

One more round. Philippe, and then I've got to see the television people.

Iran

Q. Mr. President, you said you appreciate the efforts of Great Britain, Germany, France and trying to engage Iran. Why don't you join them in those cause?

The President. Well, first of all, we're joined in the process. We're on the IAEA board. We have made it clear that we agree with the objective to get rid of the weapons. The Iranians don't need—they don't need any excuses. They just need to do what the free world has asked them to do. And it's pretty clear: Give up your weapons program. And we look forward to working with our friends.

And I find this to be an excuse. You know, "We can't move because X, Y, and Z is not happening." They know what they need to do. They have been told point blank by very effective interlocutors, privately as well as public statements by our Government and your governments, "Get rid of your nuclear weapons."

And remember how this happened. This all started because there was a group not happy with the Iranian Government—of Iranian citizens—a group of Iranian citizens who weren't happy with the Government, who blew the whistle on enrichment and told the IAEA. And sure enough, upon investigation, they were enriching, and yet, they didn't tell anybody. And so we've all got to ask why. Why would you want to secretly enrich uranium? And that's what started the IAEA investigations and the need for an additional protocol, et cetera, et cetera.

And so the Iranians, I read the other day where they said, "We can't go forward unless

this, that, or the other—unless the United States is involved." They know what they need to do. That's why I appreciate the leadership of France, Great Britain, and Germany. They've been very clear about what Iran needs to do.

Alec.

Q. Mr. President—

The President. Back to the constitution?

President's Second-Term Goals

Q. No, no, no, we'll leave that one aside. [Laughter]

In the wake of your reelection last November, one of the big questions that everyone in the rest of the world was asking was, "How will a second term of President George W. Bush be different from the first one, if at all?" And one of the comments that your new Secretary of State made recently caused a lot of attention when she said, "The time for diplomacy is now," and she also talked about the need for conversations. And I just wonder if you could say, sir, how you feel your second term—how you feel you may be different in your second term from your first term? And is it the case that the famous, dare I say it, sort of straight-talking Texan President is going to be less straight-talking now? [Laughter]

The President. You know, I told the American people that in a second term, I would work with friends and allies to spread freedom and peace. I believe that. I believe that every soul desires to be free. And by spreading freedom, the world is more peaceful. That's what the lesson of Europe has been. That's what the lesson of the Middle East can be.

And so we will work together. And I will be straightforward. I don't see how you can deal with people if you're not straightforward. I mean, if you're—I worry about a leader who doesn't know what he or she believes and, therefore, is willing to kind of have everybody guess. I don't believe that's good leadership. I believe it's vital to tell people, "Here's what I believe, and how can we work together?" I think clarity is an important part of being able to achieve big goals.

But I also fully recognize that the hard work done in the past 4 years will allow us to more likely advance freedom in a peaceful

way. It's what we all want. But we can't do it alone. And that's going to be the message in Europe, that I fully recognize that.

And in most cases, we have worked closely together. And the other thing is—back to the question about multipolarity. I think that was Klaus's question, which I really didn't address head-on, which I think I need to do—which is, some have said, "Well, we must have a unified Europe to balance America." Why do you need—why—when, in fact, we share values and goals. We share the same goals, prosperity for our people, respect for human rights and dignity, and peace. And therefore, as opposed to counterbalancing each other, why don't we view this as a moment where we can move forward in a concerted fashion to achieve those goals. And so perhaps in a second term, I've got to do a better job of explaining the common goals and the fact that by working together, we are more likely to achieve them for our own—for our own security, for example.

I view this war on terror—and, again, I repeat to you, I fully understand there's going to be a different magnitude of concern, and I can understand why. But I hope there's a common understanding that we're facing an ideology that is real and hateful. There's vision, no matter how dark that vision may be, that must be confronted by people and countries who don't share that vision. Because if not, if we don't confront that ideology of hate, we'll leave behind a troubled world for children and grandchildren. And now is the time to take it on.

And so part of the dialog with our friends who share the same values is to come to a common understanding that this is a movement we face and, sure enough, it's going to strike. I mean, these people are—they hit, and they hit hard. But they do it for a reason, because they're trying to cause fear in the West, retreat in the Middle East. They'd like to have—safe haven is just a—is a mild form of their strategy. They like the parasitical relationship like they had with the Taliban in Afghanistan. They've become—the host has become so infected that they can have run of a country. There's aspirations of toppling governments in the Middle East.

In other words, these are big problems that, if not faced now, will become acute for

generations to come. And I think this is an area of common ground and importance to work together.

Klaus.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. Mr. President, you are going to meet the NATO leaders on Thursday—

The President. Yes, Klaus. I think I know where you might be going. [Laughter]

Q. Chancellor Schroeder wrote the other day that NATO was no longer an adequate mechanism for consulting, coordinating the vision of his members. Do you—

The President. Is that what he said, "adequate"? I'm not—is that—make sure you get his words right.

Q. Adequate. It is right—it is "adequate."

The President. I disagree. I think NATO is vital. And I think it's a vital relationship and one that we'll work to keep strong. I look forward to talking to him about exactly what he meant by that. But NATO is a very important relationship, as far as the United States is concerned. And it's one that has worked in the past and will work in the future, just so long as there's that strong commitment to NATO.

I'm not sure what "adequate"—make sure you got the German translation right in English.

Q. Yes, the word was "adequate."

The President. Okay, Klaus, I'll take your word for it. My roommate in college, by the way, was named Dieter.

Q. Does the transatlantic relationship may, indeed, need some sort of institutional overhaul?

The President. I'm not sure what that means, by that. I mean, it depends on what institutions you're talking about. If you're talking about a NATO becoming more cost effective, the ability to match threat to capability, yes, reform within NATO. And that is what the NATO leadership is now in the process of doing.

But "institutional overhaul," that's kind of a loaded word, Klaus. And I'm not castigating; I'm just trying to—I mean, it is—I don't know exactly what that means, "institutional overhaul." Does it mean diminishing the effect of, replacing with? Again, I think

NATO is a vital, necessary, important part of keeping the peace.

Matus.

Q. I would have one more Slovak question.

The President. That's what you're supposed to do.

Q. Yes.

The President. Okay.

Slovakia/Democracy

Q. Your Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, studied the history of Czechoslovakia. What did she tell you about Slovakia? What do you know from her about our country?

The President. You know, she just left the Oval Office, and she was saying to me that—bring some warm clothes. [Laughter] She also told me that I am going to be very impressed by the spirit of the people, the sense of enthusiasm for living in a free society, and will understand and get a clearer vision about how difficult it is to go from a nondemocratic to democracy. It's hard work, really hard work. We tend to take it for granted. The Slovak Republic and Russia are finding it to be hard work. And the Iraqis will find it to be hard work.

But if you look back at our own history—and this is really important to remember; I think I may say this in Belgium as well—our own march to democracy was a little rough at times. Our respective revolutions, Philippe, were a little checkered. No, but the French Revolution, the American Revolution—with all due respect, Alec, sorry to bring up the subject—[laughter]—but these were difficult adjustments. And Condi reminded me that in the Slovak Republic we'll be witnessing—I will be in a country that is—where the world is witnessing the emergence of a true democracy.

And it's an important lesson for people, important lesson for people. Lebanon must have free and fair elections. That's a place where the French and I—Jacques and I tend to—will want to talk about. But elections are one thing, but allowing for a society to develop with minority rights and respect for culture and respect for differences of opinion is hard to do. And yet, the Slovak Republic is doing that.

All right, final question. Andrei.

Q. Thank you, sir—

The President. I'm nervous about what your question is going to be.

Russia-U.S. Relations

Q. I must admit that some of your Russian visitors today were complaining about the chilly wind here in Washington. [Laughter]

The President. I'm right with them, man, believe me. I'm a warm-weather guy. [Laughter]

Q. I wanted to ask you, sir, about your agenda for a second term and your relations with Russia. How well are we doing on the checklist that you and President Putin agreed on at Camp David? Specifically, you mentioned the energy dialog. It seemed to be, like, stopped for the past year. What can we do to reinvigorate that?

The President. Well, one of the things that Vladimir and I can do is talk about our commitment to reinvigorate it. I think, actually, the conversations seem to be going pretty good. Of course, the elections tend to disrupt things. People were wondering whether or not I was even going to be there. I know you knew I was going to be there, Andrei, but others might have not been so confident. And the campaign can disrupt dialog. And so now is a chance to—back to your initial question—there is kind of a reinvigoration that will take place because Vladimir knows I'll be there for 4 years, as will he.

But one of the things we'll discuss is the checklist, the strategic dialog, the integration of the different components. Look, I mean, energy is—the dialog is, “You got a lot of it, and we don't have much.” [Laughter] And there's ways to—but Russia has to make her mind up as to whether or not she wants to continue to attract outside capital, which is really what the energy dialog is about.

The proliferation dialog is important, and I look forward to discussing that with Vladimir and continuing to make progress to make sure that there's a safe storage of nuclear materials and clear understanding of how we can work together.

Trade is a very important dialog. I'm going to say in my speech in Belgium, I want to work with Russia so that she becomes admitted to the WTO. I know that's on Vladimir's mind, and it's something I think is an objective we all ought to work to achieve. There

are certain criterion that have to be met, and Zoellick, who is now the Deputy Secretary of State or will be soon—confirmed but not sworn in—actually spent some time working with one of his counterparts there to figure out the way forward on the WTO.

So there's a variety of kind of the different points that I look forward to talking to Vladimir about. Iran is going to be a subject I'll spend time with him on. And he's got influence in that area, on that subject, and he agrees with our friends in Europe that the Iranians should not have a nuclear weapon. And that's the common goal. And we've just got to keep sight of that goal and keep them focused on that goal—keep the Iranians focused on the goal. And that's a very important part about achieving success and not let them try to divide the United States or Europe or Russia and Europe or Russia and the United States on the subject. There needs to be—and I said this the other day—I said, “We've got to go speak with a common voice.” And that's important for the ayatollahs to hear, a common voice, in order to achieve the objective we all want.

I'm looking forward to it.

Q. Sir——

The President. Yes. Andrei, is this a followup?

Q. Yes, a followup, a very brief followup. You mentioned May and Moscow——

The President. Yes.

World War II Memorial

Q. Only a year ago, you dedicated the national memorial here in Washington to veterans. Does it mean they had not been recognized before? Your father was a veteran in that war.

The President. Oh, no, no, they've all been recognized. I mean, listen, Americans love—there have been books; the “Greatest Generation,” they were called. And this is a generation of Americans that are completely revered and loved. And I hope there's the same sense of veneration and love in Russia toward guys my dad's age.

Q. There sure is.

The President. But no, you should not—that's an interesting point you make. Just because it took a while to get the site, the money raised, the architecture done, does

not—should not reflect the great appreciation that our Nation has for those who fought in World War II.

Okay, guys, thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 9:45 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House, and the transcript was embargoed for release by the Office of the Press Secretary until 11:59 p.m. In his remarks, the President referred to President Jacques Chirac of France; Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority; and Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda of Slovakia. He also referred to Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), a component of NATO's International Security Assistance Force operating in Afghanistan. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

February 19, 2005

Good morning. Tomorrow I leave on a trip to Europe, where I will reaffirm the importance of our transatlantic relationship with our European friends and allies.

Over the last several weeks, the world has witnessed momentous events, Palestinians voting for an end to violence, Ukrainians standing up for their democratic rights, Iraqis going to the polls in free elections. And in Europe, I will talk with leaders at NATO and the European Union about how we can work together to take advantage of the historic opportunities now before us.

Leaders on both sides of the Atlantic understand that the hopes for peace in the world depend on the continued unity of free nations. We do not accept a false caricature that divides the Western world between an idealistic United States and a cynical Europe. America and Europe are the pillars of the free world. We share the same belief in freedom and the rights of every individual, and we are working together across the globe to advance our common interest and common values.

In Iraq, our shared commitment to free elections has stripped the car bombers and assassins of their most powerful weapon,

their claim to represent the wishes and aspirations of the Iraqi people. In these elections, the European Union provided vital technical assistance. NATO is helping to train army officers, police, and civilian administrators of a new Iraq. And 21 of our European coalition partners are providing forces on the ground. America and Europe are also working together to advance the cause of peace in the Holy Land, where we share the same goal of two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and freedom.

In my Inaugural Address, I said that the liberty we espouse is a universal aspiration. Many Americans trace their roots back to Europe, and we can trace many of our founding ideals there as well. It was a Frenchman who taught the Framers of our Constitution the importance of the separation of powers. It was a Scot who explained the virtues of a free market. It was an Englishman who challenged us to correct the principal defect of our founding, the plague of slavery. And it was an Italian who gave us our name, America.

America's strong ties to Europe are reflected in the largest two-way trading and investment relationship in the world. Today more than a fifth of all U.S. exports go to the European Union, and millions of Americans depend for their paychecks on the local affiliates of European parent companies.

I will work with our European partners to open markets and expand opportunities for our businesses, our workers, and farmers, and to advance the Doha Round of trade talks. I will make clear that one of my top priorities is to reduce the remaining European barriers to U.S. agricultural goods.

Even the best of friends do not agree on everything. But at the dawn of the 21st century, the deepest values and interests of America and Europe are the same, defeating terrorism, conquering poverty, expanding trade, and promoting peace. On both sides of the Atlantic, terrorist attacks on our cities and civilians have shown that freedom has dangerous enemies and that the key to a lasting peace is the advance of human liberty.

Today, security and justice and prosperity for our world depend on America and Europe working in common purpose. That

makes our transatlantic ties as vital as they have ever been. And during my visit to Europe next week, I will discuss with our friends and allies how we can strengthen those ties to build a future of peace and freedom for our children.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on February 18 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 19. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 18 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks in Brussels, Belgium

February 21, 2005

Guy, or Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for your kind introduction, and thank you for your warm hospitality. Distinguished guests and ladies and gentlemen: Laura and I are really glad to be back. I'm really pleased to visit Brussels again, the capital of a beautiful nation, the seat of the European Union and the NATO Alliance. The United States and Belgium are close allies, and we will always be warm friends.

You know, on this journey to Europe, I follow in some large footsteps. More than two centuries ago, Benjamin Franklin arrived on this continent to great acclaim. An observer wrote, "His reputation was more universal than Leibnitz or Newton, Frederick or Voltaire, and his character more beloved and esteemed than any or all of them." The observer went on to say, "There was scarcely a peasant or a citizen who did not consider him as a friend to humankind." I have been hoping for a similar reception—[laughter]—but Secretary Rice told me I should be a realist. [Laughter]

I appreciate the opportunity, in this great hall, to speak to the peoples of Europe. For more than 60 years, our nations stood together to face great challenges of history. Together, we opposed totalitarian ideologies with our might and with our patience. Together, we united this continent with our democratic values. And together we mark, year by year, the anniversaries of freedom,

from D-day to the liberation of death camps to the victories of conscience in 1989. Our transatlantic alliance frustrated the plans of dictators, served the highest ideals of humanity, and set a violent century on a new and better course. And as time goes by, we must never forget our shared achievements.

Yet, our relationship is founded on more than nostalgia. In a new century, the alliance of Europe and North America is the main pillar of our security. Our robust trade is one of the engines of the world's economy. Our example of economic and political freedom gives hope to millions who are weary of poverty and oppression. In all these ways, our strong friendship is essential to peace and prosperity across the globe, and no temporary debate, no passing disagreement of governments, no power on Earth will ever divide us.

Today, America and Europe face a moment of consequence and opportunity. Together we can once again set history on a hopeful course away from poverty and despair and toward development and the dignity of self-rule, away from resentment and violence and toward justice and the peaceful settlement of differences. Seizing this moment requires idealism; we must see in every person the right and the capacity to live in freedom. Seizing this moment requires realism; we must act wisely and deliberately in the face of complex challenges. And seizing this moment also requires cooperation, because when Europe and America stand together, no problem can stand against us. As past debates fade, as great duties become clear, let us begin a new era of transatlantic unity.

Our greatest opportunity and immediate goal is peace in the Middle East. After many false starts and dashed hopes and stolen lives, a settlement of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is now within reach. America and Europe have made a moral commitment: We will not stand by as another generation in the Holy Land grows up in an atmosphere of violence and hopelessness. America and Europe also share a strategic interest. By helping to build a lasting peace, we will remove an unsettled grievance that is used to stir hatred and violence across the Middle East.

Our efforts are guided by a clear vision. We're determined to see two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. The Palestinian people deserve a government that is representative, honest, and peaceful. The people of Israel need an end to terror and a reliable, steadfast partner for peace. And the world must not rest until there is a just and lasting resolution to this conflict.

All the parties have responsibilities to meet. Arab states must end incitement in their own media, cut off public and private funding for terrorism, stop their support for extremist education, and establish normal relations with Israel. Palestinian leaders must confront and dismantle terrorist groups, fight corruption, encourage free enterprise, and rest true authority with the people. Only a democracy can serve the hopes of Palestinians and make Israel secure and raise the flag of a free Palestine.

A successful Palestinian democracy should be Israel's top goal as well, so Israel must freeze settlement activity, help Palestinians build a thriving economy, and ensure that a new Palestinian state is truly viable, with contiguous territory on the West Bank. A state of scattered territories will not work. As Palestinian leaders assume responsibility for Gaza and increasingly larger territory, we will help them build the economic and political and security institutions needed to govern effectively. And as that democracy rises, the United States and Europe will help the parties implement the roadmap to peace.

These vital steps are also difficult steps, because progress requires new trust and because terrorists will do all they can to destroy that trust. Yet we are moving forward, and we are doing so in practical ways. Next month in London, Prime Minister Blair will host a conference to help the Palestinian people build the democratic institutions of their state. President Abbas has the opportunity to put forward a strategy of reform which can and will gain support from the international community—including financial support. I hope he will seize the moment. I have asked Secretary Rice to attend the conference and to convey America's strong support for the Palestinian people as they build a democratic state. And I appreciate

the prominent role that Prime Minister Blair and other European leaders are playing in the cause of peace.

We seek peace between Israel and Palestine for its own sake. We also know that a free and peaceful Palestine can add to the momentum of reform throughout the broader Middle East. In the long run, we cannot live in peace and safety if the Middle East continues to produce ideologies of murder and terrorists who seek the deadliest weapons. Regimes that terrorize their own people will not hesitate to support terror abroad. A status quo of tyranny and hopelessness in the Middle East, the false stability of dictatorship and stagnation, can only lead to deeper resentment in a troubled region and further tragedy in free nations. The future of our nations and the future of the Middle East are linked, and our peace depends on their hope and development and freedom.

Lasting, successful reform in the broader Middle East will not be imposed from the outside; it must be chosen from within. Governments must choose to fight corruption, abandon old habits of control, protect the rights of conscience and the rights of minorities. Governments must invest in the health and education of their people and take responsibility for solving problems instead of simply blaming others. Citizens must choose to hold their governments accountable. The path isn't always easy, as any free people can testify, yet there's reason for confidence. Ultimately, men and women who seek the success of their nation will reject an ideology of oppression and anger and fear. Ultimately, men and women will embrace participation and progress—and we are seeing the evidence in an arc of reform from Morocco to Bahrain to Iraq to Afghanistan.

Our challenge is to encourage this progress by taking up the duties of great democracies. We must be on the side of democratic reformers. We must encourage democratic movements, and we must support democratic transitions in practical ways.

Europe and America should not expect or demand that reforms come all at once. That didn't happen in our own histories. My country took many years to include minorities and women in the full promise of America, and that struggle hasn't ended. Yet, while our ex-

pectations must be realistic, our ideals must be firm, and they must be clear. We must expect higher standards from our friends and partners in the Middle East. The Government of Saudi Arabia can demonstrate its leadership in the region by expanding the role of its people in determining their future. And the great and proud nation of Egypt, which showed the way toward peace in the Middle East, can now show the way toward democracy in the Middle East.

Our shared commitment to democratic progress is being tested in Lebanon, a once-thriving country that now suffers under the influence of an oppressive neighbor. Just as the Syrian regime must take stronger action to stop those who support violence and subversion in Iraq and must end its support for terrorist groups seeking to destroy the hope of peace between Israelis and Palestinians, Syria must also end its occupation of Lebanon.

The Lebanese people have the right to be free, and the United States and Europe share an interest in a democratic, independent Lebanon. My Nation and France worked to pass Security Council Resolution 1559, which demands that Lebanon's sovereignty be respected, that foreign troops and agents be withdrawn, and that free elections be conducted without foreign interference. In the last several months, the world has seen men and women voting in historic elections from Kabul to Ramallah to Baghdad, and without Syrian interference, Lebanon's parliamentary elections in the spring can be another milestone of liberty.

Our commitment to democratic progress is being honored in Afghanistan. That country is building a democracy that reflects Afghan traditions and history and shows the way for other nations in the region. The elected President is working to disarm and demobilize militias in preparation for the National Assembly elections to be held this spring. And the Afghan people know the world is with them. After all, Germany is providing vital police training. The United Kingdom is helping to fight drug trade. Italy is giving assistance on judicial reform. NATO's growing security mission is commanded by a Turkish general. European Governments

are helping Afghanistan to succeed, and America appreciates your leadership.

Together, we must make clear to the Iraqi people that the world is also with them, because they have certainly shown their character to the world. An Iraqi man who lost a leg in a car bombing last year made sure he was there to vote on January the 30th. He said, "I would have crawled here if I had to. I don't want terrorists to kill other Iraqis like they tried to kill me. Today I am voting for peace." Every vote cast in Iraq was an act of defiance against terror, and the Iraqi people have earned our respect.

Some Europeans joined the fight to liberate Iraq, while others did not. Yet all of us recognize courage when we see it, and we saw it in the Iraqi people. And all nations now have an interest in the success of a free and democratic Iraq, which will fight terror, which will be a beacon of freedom, and which will be a source of true stability in the region. In the coming months, Iraq's newly elected assembly will carry out the important work of establishing a government, providing security, enhancing basic services, and writing a democratic constitution. Now is the time for established democracies to give tangible political, economic, and security assistance to the world's newest democracy.

In Iran, the free world shares a common goal. For the sake of peace, the Iranian regime must end its support for terrorism and must not develop nuclear weapons. In safeguarding the security of free nations, no option can be taken permanently off the table. Iran, however, is different from Iraq. We're in the early stages of diplomacy. The United States is a member of the IAEA Board of Governors, which has taken the lead on this issue. We're working closely with Britain, France, and Germany as they oppose Iran's nuclear ambitions and as they insist that Tehran comply with international law. The results of this approach now depend largely on Iran. We also look for Iran to finally deliver on promised reform. The time has arrived for the Iranian regime to listen to the Iranian people and respect their rights and join in the movement toward liberty that is taking place all around them.

Across the Middle East, from the Palestinian Territories to Lebanon to Iraq to Iran,

I believe that the advance of freedom within nations will build the peace among nations. And one reason for this belief is the experience of Europe. In two World Wars, Europe saw the aggressive nature of tyranny and the terrible cost of mistrust and division. In the cold war, Europe saw the so-called stability of Yalta was a constant source of injustice and fear, and Europe also saw how the rise of democratic movements like Solidarity could part an Iron Curtain drawn by tyrants. The spread of freedom has helped to resolve old disputes, and the enlargement of NATO and the European Union have made partners out of former rivals. America supports Europe's democratic unity for the same reason we support the spread of democracy in the Middle East, because freedom leads to peace. America supports a strong Europe because we need a strong partner in the hard work of advancing freedom and peace in the world.

European leaders demonstrated this vision in Ukraine. Presidents Kwasniewski of Poland, Adamkus of Lithuania, Javier Solana of the EU helped to resolve the election crisis and bring Ukraine back into the camp of freedom. As a free Government takes hold in that country and as the Government of President Yushchenko pursues vital reforms, Ukraine should be welcomed by the Euro-Atlantic family. We must support new democracies, so members of our Alliance must continue to reach out to Georgia, where last year peaceful protests overturned a stolen election and unleashed the forces of democratic change.

I also believe that Russia's future lies within the family of Europe and the transatlantic community. America supports WTO membership for Russia, because meeting WTO standards will strengthen the gains of freedom and prosperity in that country. Yet, for Russia to make progress as a European nation, the Russian Government must renew a commitment to democracy and the rule of law. We recognize that reform will not happen overnight. We must always remind Russia, however, that our alliance stands for a free press, a vital opposition, the sharing of power, and the rule of law. And the United States and all European countries should

place democratic reform at the heart of their dialog with Russia.

As we seek freedom in other nations, we must also work to renew the values that make freedom possible. As I said in my Inaugural Address, we cannot carry the message of freedom and the baggage of bigotry at the same time. We must reject anti-Semitism from any source, and we must condemn violence such as we have witnessed in the Netherlands. All our nations must work to integrate minorities into the mainstream of society and to teach the value of tolerance to each new generation.

The nations in our great alliance have many advantages and many blessings. We also have a call beyond our comfort; we must raise our sights to the wider world. Our ideals and our interests lead in the same direction: By bringing progress and hope to nations in need, we can improve many lives and lift up failing states and remove the causes and sanctuaries of terror.

Our alliance is determined to promote development and integrate developing nations into the world economy. The measure of our success must be the results we achieve, not merely the resources we spend. Together, we created the Monterrey Consensus, which links new aid from developed nations to real reform in developing ones. This strategy is working. Throughout the developing world, governments are confronting corruption, the rule of law is taking root, and people are enjoying new freedoms. Developed nations have responded by increasing assistance by a third.

Through the Millennium Challenge Account, my Nation is increasing our aid to developing nations that govern justly, expand economic freedom, and invest in the education and health of their people. While still providing humanitarian assistance and support, developed nations are taking a wiser approach to other aid. Instead of subsidizing failure year after year, we must reward progress and improve lives.

Our alliance is determined to encourage commerce among nations, because open markets create jobs and lift income and draw whole nations into an expanding circle of freedom and opportunity. Europe and America will continue to increase trade, and as

we do so, we'll resolve our trade disagreements in a cooperative spirit. And we should share the benefits of fair and free trade with others. That's why we'll continue to advance the Doha Development Agenda and bring global trade talks to a successful conclusion. We should all pursue fiscal policies in our nations, sound fiscal policies of low taxes and fiscal restraint and reform, that promote a stable world financial system and foster economic growth.

Our alliance is determined to show good stewardship of the earth, and that requires addressing the serious, long-term challenge of global climate change. All of us expressed our views on the Kyoto Protocol, and now we must work together on the way forward. Emerging technologies, such as hydrogen-powered vehicles, electricity from renewable energy sources, clean coal technology, will encourage economic growth that is environmentally responsible. By researching, by developing, by promoting new technologies across the world, all nations, including the developing countries, can advance economically while slowing the growth in global greenhouse gases and avoid pollutants that undermines public health. All of us can use the power of human ingenuity to improve the environment for generations to come.

Our alliance is determined to meet natural disaster, famine, and disease with swift and compassionate help. As we meet today, American and European personnel are aiding the victims of the tsunami in Asia. Our combined financial commitment to tsunami relief and reconstruction is nearly \$4 billion. We're working through the Global Fund to combat AIDS and other diseases across the world. And America's Emergency Plan has focused additional resources on nations where the needs are greatest. Through all these efforts, we encourage stability and progress, build a firmer basis for democratic institutions, and above all, we fulfill a moral duty to heal the sick and feed the hungry and comfort the afflicted.

Our alliance is also determined to defend our security, because we refuse to live in a world dominated by fear. Terrorist movements seek to intimidate free peoples and reverse the course of history by committing

dramatic acts of murder. We will not be intimidated, and the terrorists will not stop the march of freedom. I thank the nations of Europe for your strong cooperation in the war on terror. Together, we have disrupted terrorist financing, strengthened intelligence sharing, enhanced our law enforcement cooperation, and improved the security of international commerce and travel.

We're pursuing terrorists wherever they hide. German authorities recently arrested two terrorists plotting to attack American interests in Iraq. Both will be prosecuted under new German laws enacted after September the 11th. Just last week, the United Nations added Muhsin al-Fadhli to its Al Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee list. This man is a known Al Qaida operative and Zarqawi associate, provided support to the terrorists who conducted the 2002 bombing of a French oil tanker. Working together, America, France, and other nations will bring him to justice. For the sake of the security of our people, for the sake of peace, we will be relentless in chasing down the ideologues of hate.

On September the 11th, America turned first to our immediate security and to the pursuit of an enemy, and that vital work goes on. We also found that a narrow definition of security is not enough. While confronting a present threat, we have accepted the long-term challenge of spreading hope and liberty and prosperity as the great alternatives to terror. As we defeat the agents of terror, we will also remove the sources of terror.

This strategy is not an American strategy or a European strategy or a Western strategy. Spreading liberty for the sake of peace is the cause of all mankind. This approach not only reduces a danger to free peoples; it honors the dignity of all peoples by placing human rights and human freedom at the center of our agenda. And our alliance has the ability and the duty to tip the balance of history in the favor of freedom.

We know there are many obstacles, and we know the road is long. Albert Camus said that "Freedom is a long-distance race." We're in that race for the duration, and there is reason for optimism. Oppression is not the wave of the future; it is the desperate tactic of a few backward-looking men. Democratic nations grow in strength because they reward

and respect the creative gifts of their people. Freedom is the direction of history, because freedom is the permanent hope of humanity.

America holds these values because of ideals long held on this continent. We proudly stand in the tradition of the Magna Carta, the Declaration of the Rights of Man, and the North Atlantic Treaty. The signers of that treaty pledged "To safeguard the freedom, common heritage, and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law." In this new century, the United States and Europe reaffirm that commitment and renew our great alliance of freedom.

May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:08 p.m. at the Concert Noble. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt of Belgium; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; Lt. Gen. Ethem Erdagi, commander, International Security Assistance Force, NATO; President Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland; President Valdas Adamkus of Lithuania; Secretary General Javier Solana of the European Council; President Viktor Yushchenko of Ukraine; and senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi.

Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and President Jacques Chirac: Lebanon

February 21, 2005

The United States and France join with the European Union and the international community in condemning the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, and in their support for a free, independent, and democratic Lebanon. We support the U.N. investigation into this terrorist act and urge the full cooperation of all parties in order to identify those responsible for this act.

We urge full and immediate implementation of UNSCR 1559 in all its aspects, including its call for a sovereign, independent, and democratic Lebanon as well as for the consolidation of security under the authority of a Lebanese government free from foreign domination.

Lebanon's forthcoming parliamentary elections can mark another milestone in Lebanon's return to independence and democracy if they are free and fair, conducted without outside interference, and guaranteed by international observers. The implementation of UNSCR 1559 is essential to the organization and success of these elections. The people of Lebanon deserve this opportunity, and we stand with them in their aspirations for freedom, sovereignty, and security.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Jacques Chirac of France and an Exchange With Reporters in Brussels

February 21, 2005

President Bush. It's my honor to be joining Jacques Chirac for dinner. I thank you for coming, sir. I've really been looking forward to this moment.

Every time I meet with Jacques, he's got good advice. And I'm looking forward to listening to you. We've got a lot of issues to talk about, Middle Eastern peace, Lebanon, Iran, helping to feed the hungry, working together to help spread medicines necessary to cure illness.

So, Mr. President, thank you very much for your—coming back for dinner, and thank you for your time.

President Chirac. Thank you. It's, of course, a great pleasure. It always is great pleasure to meet with President Bush. And let me take this opportunity to thank him for his very warm welcome to me today as always.

Now, President Bush and I have always shared very—always had very warm relations, which in fact translate, to a certain extent, of relations—of warm relations that have always been characterized—the links between our countries and the relations, be they bilateral or transatlantic ones, which have always been excellent between France and the United States.

Indeed, we have struggled for some two centuries, 200 years now, to uphold and keep

alive these values which we share, and which our people share and hold very dear to their hearts, and which we are very attached to.

We are present together, that is to say France and the United States, in some of the world's hotspots. I'm thinking of Afghanistan. I'm thinking of the Balkans, of course, but I'm thinking also of what we're doing in Haiti and in Africa. I'm thinking also of our excellent cooperation over the tragedy in Asia, from the tsunami here. And let me take this opportunity to thank the President for all the help that was extended to our military by the American military, for instance, the making available to our military of American helicopters, which made our work that much easier.

So we do share many, many ideals and values. We have many things in common. For instance, we, together, are struggling against the scourge of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism. And we adopted—we have the same approach to the situation which is prevailing in Lebanon, especially following the murder of former Prime Minister Hariri, who, of course, was a man who enshrined the ideals of democracy, independence, and liberty of that country.

Therefore, I am looking forward to a very constructive discussion, and I welcome this new opportunity to meet with the President and in a broader context, which is that of the continuing dialog, ongoing dialog between the United States and the rest of Europe.

President Bush. Tom [Tom Raum, Associated Press].

Russia

Q. For both Presidents: You talked about Russia, Mr. President, in your speech. What practical things can you do to pressure Russia to go back to a path towards democracy? And should you, for instance, make membership in the WTO contingent on Russia renewing its commitment to democracy? For both Presidents, please.

President Bush. Part of the WTO requirements are that there be an open market, that there be a liberal economy. And open markets and liberal economies tend to attract countries that are open to the voices of their people.

I look forward to seeing Vladimir Putin in 2 days. I've got a good relationship with Vladimir; I intend to keep it that way. But as well, I intend to remind him that if his interests lie West, that we share values, and that we—and those values are important. They're not only important for people that live within Russia; they're important to have good relations with the West.

France-U.S. Relations

Q. The first question to President Chirac. You have said, sir, yourself, that relations have always been excellent between France and the United States. We get the sense that in recent weeks they have become even better. They have become warmer and that there's a veritable new honeymoon, as it were, taking place.

And to you, President Bush, may I ask the following question: If, indeed, relations have improved, if certainly they are better between France and the United States, are they good enough as yet for that to warrant an invitation to President Chirac to go to the United States or even to your ranch? [*Laughter*]

President Bush. I'm looking for a good cowboy. [*Laughter*]

President Chirac. Let me say—repeat what I already said, namely, that our relations are indeed excellent. But they have been excellent for over 200 years now, because—why do I say that? Because they are based upon common values, common values that we share. And these things don't change overnight, with the wave of a wand.

Now, of course, that doesn't mean that because we share common values we don't—we necessarily agree on everything all the time. Of course, we can have our differences, our divergence of opinion. Recently, this was the case. We didn't share the same view over Iraq. But this in no way affects or in no way undermines the bedrock of our relations, namely, our common values and our common vision. And I repeat what I said earlier on, namely, that I feel it's so important that within the broader context of U.S.-EU relations, this relationship should continue to be cemented, broadened, and strengthened.

President Bush. This is my first dinner, since I've been reelected, on European soil,

and it's with Jacques Chirac, and that ought to say something. It ought to say how important this relationship is for me, personally, and how important this relationship is for my country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:13 p.m. in the Ambassador's Residence at the U.S. Embassy. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Putin of Russia. President Chirac referred to former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri of Lebanon, who was assassinated on February 14 in Beirut. President Chirac spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom in Brussels

February 22, 2005

President Bush. I just had a good breakfast. I always enjoy being with my friend Tony Blair. We talked about the progress being made in Iraq, and I want to congratulate you on your vision. The Iraqis are—you know, have defied the terrorists and showed the world they want to live in a free society, and we're there to help them achieve that.

I'm looking forward to the NATO meeting today. NATO is a vital relationship for the United States and for Europe. And I'm looking forward to meeting with the EU as well. As I said in my speech yesterday, a strong Europe is very important for the United States, and I really meant that. And the Prime Minister is one of the strong leaders in Europe, and I really enjoy my relationship with him.

Prime Minister Blair. First of all, I'm pleased to come and talk to the President again and go through the range of different issues that we face in the world today. And I both welcome the President's speech yesterday very much and thanked him for it. And I think what it sets out is a very clear way forward for us now. Whatever the differences in the international community have been over the past couple of years, I think we have a really solid basis now for going forward in a unified way. And if we take that

opportunity, it will be greatly for the benefit of the international community.

We can see this, obviously, with Iraq, where after the democratic elections that are held now, it's possible to see a way forward in which Iraq can become a stable and a prosperous and a democratic state. And after all the tragedies of the past and the dictatorship and the loss of life under Saddam, there's now real prospect for the Iraqi people. And that, joined to what has happened in Afghanistan, I think gives us real hope for the future.

In addition, the President set out very clearly a way forward on the Middle East peace process. There's a renewed sense of vigor and optimism in that process. And with the London conference coming up next week, I think we've got every possibility now of trying to reach a settlement, which I think would do so much for international relations worldwide.

Then, of course, we also went through many of the other issues, to the upcoming G-8 later in the year and so on. So it was, as ever, a very constructive, very useful discussion across a whole range of issues. And as I say, I think that yesterday's speech and today's meeting at NATO gives us an opportunity to restate for people in Europe and in America the fundamental importance of this transatlantic alliance. It's been a cornerstone of our security for many, many years. It's based on shared values. It's absolutely the right thing for us to have at the center of our relations. And we'll do everything we can to make sure that that relationship is strong.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:42 a.m. at the Chief of Mission Residence at the U.S. Embassy. In his remarks, Prime Minister Blair referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's News Conference With Secretary General Jakob Gijbert "Jaap" de Hoop Scheffer of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

February 22, 2005

Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer.

Good afternoon. Very good afternoon to you. Let me start by—this press conference by echoing what was said many times around the table this morning, and that is, thanks to President Bush that he is here, showing the continued commitment to NATO so shortly after his Inauguration. I mean, I would be unfaithful to the discussion if I didn't start like this. So let me say once again on my own behalf, Mr. President, thank you for being here. Thank you for coming.

What did we discuss; what have I heard today? I have heard strong support for the Atlantic Alliance. I have heard strong support for the common values which bind us, in the past, in the present, and in the future.

I have heard strong support for NATO's operations and missions, strong support for what we are doing in Afghanistan and our further ambitions, strong support for the training mission in Iraq, where we have further ambitions in setting up the training academy and where we have now fully manned and financed what we committed to do. And you know it's the Iraqi Government's first priority, training the Iraqi security forces so that their dependence on others can be less than it is at the moment. I heard strong support for our continued presence in Kosovo and stability in the Balkans.

I've heard a discussion on the importance of a strong NATO-EU partnership. At length, government leaders, heads of state discussed the political role of NATO, the stronger political role of NATO, and there was a lot of support for what I have been saying over the past 8, 9 months: that this political role is important, that NATO is a political-military alliance and that we should not shy away from discussing political subjects of relevance.

Many remarks and interventions were made on the Middle East, the importance of NATO's Mediterranean dialog, which is being strengthened, the importance of the

Istanbul Cooperation Initiative for these activities of NATO in this very pivotal region where security and stability is not only important for the region but far beyond. Of course, the hopes for progress in the Israeli-Palestinian question were discussed, and I think it's important that, by outreaching into the region, NATO follow this process, although it does not play a primary role.

Of course, let me come back to Ukraine this morning. There is strong support, strong support, first of all, for NATO's bottom line, which is NATO has an open door for those European democracies who fulfill the obligations, strong support for giving President Yushchenko, in his challenging endeavor to bring Ukraine closer to Euro-Atlantic integration—to support him in that respect.

In other words, because I want to be brief, it was an excellent summit. It was an excellent summit. It was an excellent idea of the President to come here, to have this summit here and now, because there is a daunting and challenging task and a daunting and challenging agenda waiting for NATO. And we'll go for that agenda. And I'll make proposals in the not too distant future on this political role for NATO. And the atmosphere was excellent, and that was the way it should be, because what binds us are the values. We'll discuss them; we'll have difference of opinion, yes, from time to time, but there is a lot more we agree upon, and that is the bottom line. And that's the basis for this great Alliance, and that's the way I, in my responsibility, having this privilege of being Secretary General, I will run the Alliance.

Mr. President.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. It's good to be back here to the NATO Headquarters. This is my first trip overseas of my second term, and I'm proud to make the home of NATO my first stop. And I appreciate the invitation. You've done a fine job of running the meetings. You're doing a fine job of being the Secretary General, I want you to know, and I appreciate all our friends who were around the table today for their strong commitment to NATO.

It was a healthy dialog, and that strong commitment is important. After all, NATO is the most successful alliance in the history of the world—think about that, the most suc-

cessful alliance in the history of the world. Because of NATO, Europe is whole and united and at peace. And that's a milestone in the history of liberty.

NATO is the home for nine former members of the Warsaw Pact. You know, the leaders of those countries, when they sit around the table, bring such vitality to the discussions that we have. See, it's still fresh in their memories what it meant to live in a society that wasn't free. I said in my remarks today that, you know, sometimes you can take a relationship for granted, and it was very important for us not to take the NATO relationship for granted. One thing is for certain: The newly admitted countries don't take NATO for granted. As a matter of fact, they add a vitality to the discussions that I find refreshing and hopeful. NATO is an important organization, and the United States of America strongly supports it.

I appreciate so very much the transformation of NATO that's taking place. In order for NATO to be vital, it's got to be relevant, and if it stays stuck in the past, it's slowly but surely going to fade into oblivion. But it's not staying stuck in the past. We've created the NATO Response Force—and I want to thank you for your leadership on that, Jaap—and the chemical and biological and radiological and nuclear battalion. The NATO command structure is streamlined.

NATO is involved in the Middle East, a world—a part of the world desperate for freedom. And I want to thank you for your leadership on that. And we had a lot—spent a lot of time talking about the NATO contribution to Afghanistan, and it is real and it is important and it is substantial. And more countries are committed to providing help for the RPTs [PRTs]* as well as the upcoming elections, and I'm most grateful.

And then we discussed the NATO contribution in Iraq. First, many member countries have sent troops into Iraq as a part of the liberation of Iraq. And I thanked them there, and I reminded them that every life is precious and we appreciate the sacrifices being made by their citizens. But 26 nations sat around the table saying, "Let's get the

* White House correction.

past behind us, and now let's focus on helping the world's newest democracy succeed." And I appreciated the contributions. And the NATO training mission is an important mission, because, after all, the success of Iraq depends upon the capacity and the willingness of Iraqis to defend their own selves against terrorists.

So the discussions were fruitful. The Ukraine—the meeting with President Yushchenko was, I thought, historic. I thought it was really interesting to be sitting next to a person—the Secretary General put me right next to President Yushchenko—who had just led a revolution, a peaceful revolution, based upon the same values that we hold dear. And it was a remarkable moment, I thought.

And we—at least in my intervention and other interventions, we welcomed President Yushchenko and reminded him that NATO is a performance-based organization and that the door is open, but it's up to President Yushchenko and his Government and the people of Ukraine to adapt the institutions of a democratic state. And NATO wants to help, and we pledged help. I pledged my own Government's help to a fund that will help get rid of MADPADS—MANPADS and certain different types of weapons. In other words, the country has got work to do, but we want to help them achieve that work. It was a remarkable moment. I appreciate you inviting him, Jaap, to come.

We also look forward to working with Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia as these states participate in NATO's Membership Action Plan. All in all, the meeting was really important. I am really glad I came. It gave me a chance to say that the relationship between the United States and Europe is a vital relationship, a necessary relationship, an important relationship, and our relationship within NATO is the cornerstone of that relationship. So, Jaap, thank you for your hospitality. Glad to be here.

Arms Embargo on China

Q. Mr. President, European countries are talking about lifting their 15-year arms embargo on China. What would be the consequences of that? And could it be done in a way that would satisfy your concerns?

President Bush. Well, I talked about this issue with President Chirac last night and Prime Minister Blair, and I intend to talk about it here in a couple of hours at the European Union meeting. We didn't discuss the issue at NATO, by the way. And here's what I explained. I said there is deep concern in our country that a transfer of weapons would be a transfer of technology to China, which would change the balance of relations between China and Taiwan, and that's of concern. And they, to a person, said, well, they think they can develop a protocol that isn't—that shouldn't concern the United States. And I said I'm looking forward to seeing it and that they need to make sure that if they do so, that they sell it to the United States Congress, that the Congress will be making the decisions as to whether or not—as to how to react to what will be perceived by some, perhaps, as a technology transfer to China.

But it was an important dialog. It was a very open dialog. There's no—it was very constructive. And so they will, as I understand it—and I don't want to put words in people's mouth, but I am told that there is a—that they've heard the concerns of the United States. They're listening to the concerns of the administration as first articulated by Secretary of State Rice, and they know the Congress's concern. And so they will try to develop a plan that will ease concerns. Now, whether they can or not, we'll see.

Q. So do you think it might fly?

President Bush. Pardon me? I don't know. It's all speculation at this point. The purpose of this trip has been to articulate concerns that are being expressed throughout the Government, both in the executive branch and legislative branch, about the decision—or the potential decision. And I've been listening. And you might call this a listening tour, that people have got things on their mind and they want me to hear it, and part of what they've got on their mind is the dialog that's taking place with China and the European Union.

Role of NATO

Q. Mr. President, about a week ago in Munich, we have had the old and the new Rumsfeld—[laughter]—but the thing is—

President Bush. Same old Bush. [*Laughter*]

Q. But the new Rumsfeld is still saying the mission determines the coalition. What does that mean, exactly, Mr. President? Does that mean that for you, this Alliance, NATO, is just one tool in the American toolbox to face crisis?

President Bush. No, you're going to have to ask Secretary Rumsfeld what he meant by that when he said it. I'll tell you what I think, and since I'm his boss, it's probably pretty relevant. [*Laughter*] I think it is the vital relationship for the United States when it comes to security. And it is a relationship that is—has worked in the past and is adjusting so that it works in the future. It's a relationship and a organization that needs to make sure that its capabilities meet the threats of the 21st century. And so this is a vital relationship.

And as the Secretary General mentioned, that there needs to be a political component, a place for us to come and have a strategic dialog. He has raised that issue; Chancellor Schroeder raised the issue. And everybody heard Chancellor Schroeder loud and clear; everybody heard the Secretary General loud and clear, and that is, is that in order for NATO to be relevant, it has to be a place where people feel comfortable about talking about strategic issues.

And we do talk about strategic issues. And what Jaap has just said—and you're welcome to clarify what you just said, if you feel like it—but as he said, he's going to come back with an action plan to make sure that NATO's relevance is strong, not only to have the capabilities necessary to defend our respective securities but as a place for us to have meaningful dialog. Isn't that what you said?

Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer. I could start by adding, of course, it's young Bush and young de Hoop Scheffer who are talking here. [*Laughter*] I mean, that goes without saying. [*Laughter*]

To come back to your question, it is, indeed, as President Bush has said, it is—NATO is a political-military organization. And when we want—in the areas where we operate, be it Afghanistan, be it Kosovo, in Iraq—if NATO wants to go on keeping the

public, parliamentary support for its operations and for its missions, we really need to discuss the key political questions surrounding those operations and missions.

And you cannot deny that when NATO is reinforcing its Mediterranean dialog, when NATO is reaching out into the broader Middle East—and you know that the reactions have been very positive up until now—it is relevant for the NATO Alliance to discuss these issues in the broadest sense. You can't do the one without the other. And as President Bush was saying, this is the path. I'll try to lead, because a vital Alliance means that this Alliance is a vital political-military organization. That is the object of the exercise, to say it like this.

NATO Contributions in Iraq

Q. Thank you, sir. Some of the contributions on Iraq involve only a few people, modest amounts of money. Is this going to be enough, or is largely symbolic?

President Bush. Well, first of all, when you look around the table, Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters], that you see countries that have made enormous contributions, and the biggest contribution of all is when they've sent a person into combat and that person lost their life. That is a significant contribution. And the United States of America is grateful for those contributions, and we honor every life. The key is to make sure that those lives that were lost don't go down in vain, that a free and democratic and peaceful country emerges. Every contribution matters.

Twenty-six nations sitting around that table said it's important for NATO to be involved in Iraq. That's a strong statement. And NATO is involved in Iraq, and NATO is doing a vital mission, which is to help an officer corps emerge. The truth of the matter is, in order for Iraq to be a secure country, there has to be a chain of command that is effective and works, so that commands go from a political body to a military, and the military commands goes down so that people enact the orders in order to keep the people safe. That is what has to happen. And NATO is providing an officer training mission, which is vital.

Every contribution matters, and every country ought to be proud of the fact that they're contributing to the world's newest democracy. This organization is an organization that's based upon values, values that have stood the test of time, values that are universal, and values that are necessary for the world to be peaceful. And the contributions made into Iraq are based upon those values. And I am grateful.

Europe-U.S. Relations/Democracy

Q. I have two questions, one for the President and one for the Secretary General.

President Bush. Finally, he got a question. [Laughter]

Q. Well, I'll put my question first to you, Mr. President. The wider European audience, it won't be a surprise for you, is still skeptical about the policies of your administration, often being considered as dictating or unilateral. Now, on this trip, you have launched a sort of major charm offensive—at least the Europeans will see it that way. [Laughter]

President Bush. Well, thank you. I appreciate it. First time I've been called charming in a while. [Laughter]

Q. But the question is, what are you going to do really differently in your second term to improve transatlantic relations?

And for the Secretary General, the question is, what should the Europeans do to improve transatlantic relations?

President Bush. Well, our bilateral relations are very strong with many countries, like your country. We've had 4 years, great relations. And matter of fact, last night, my dinner with President Chirac reminded me that except for one major issue, and that being Iraq, we've done a lot together in my first 4 years. If you think about it, we've participated in Afghanistan together; we've participated in Haiti; we're working on the Global Fund to battle AIDS. I mean, there's a lot we have done together.

The major issue that irritated a lot of Europeans was Iraq. I understand that. I can figure it out. And the key now is to put that behind us and to focus on helping the new democracy succeed. It's in our interests—it's in your country's interests; it's in my coun-

try's interests that democracy take hold in the greater Middle East.

The policy in the past used to be, let's just accept tyranny, for the sake of—well, you know, cheap oil or whatever it may be and just hope everything would be okay. Well, that changed on September the 11th for our Nation. Everything wasn't okay. Beneath what appeared to be a placid surface lurked an ideology based upon hatred. And the way to defeat that ideology is to spread freedom and democracy. That's what NATO understands, see. That's one of the reasons why—NATO is one of the reasons why Europe is whole and free and at peace, because democracies defeat hatred and suspicion.

And so I will explain—continue to explain as best I can to skeptical people about my policy, that it's based on this concept that we all share, no matter your views on Iraq or not. And that is, every human being deserves to be free and that human dignity is vital and that free societies are peaceful societies. And I will make a commitment again to you, just like I made yesterday and will continue to make, that I'll take those values into the Middle Eastern peace process. As I said in my State of the Union, peace is within reach—that's right about here. And we've got to work together to achieve that.

And so my message is, is that the past is—I made some hard decisions, as did other leaders, by the way, in Europe, about how to enforce 17 different United Nations resolutions on Iraq, not one resolution but 17 different resolutions. And we liberated Iraq, and that decision has been made. It's over with, and now it's time to unify for the sake of peace. And I believe that message—I believe—forget the charm part. I believe that message is a message that people can understand. And they're beginning to see that the strategy is working.

Millions of people of voted in Afghanistan. I doubt many of you here were writing articles about, "Oh, gosh, the elections in Afghanistan are going to be incredibly successful." It didn't seem like it was possible, did it? But yet, there's something in everybody's soul, in my judgment, that desires to be free. And the people of Afghanistan showed that by the millions—not by the handfuls but by the millions—when given a chance to vote.

Same in Iraq. And there was an election in Ukraine—two elections in Ukraine. And then there was the election in the Palestinian Territory. Freedom is on the march, is the way I like to put it. And the world is better off for it. And I look forward to continue to articulate how we can work together to keep freedom on the march.

Thank you all very much.

Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer. Let me—

President Bush. Oh, I'm sorry.

Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer. No, no, no—

President Bush. He gave me a hand signal that said he didn't want to answer. [Laughter] You don't know what this means. [Laughter] That means, "End the press conference." [Laughter]

Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer. I signaled to the President this was too difficult a question, but I nevertheless answer very briefly.

NATO is 26—not 25 plus one or 24 plus 2. NATO showed today that these 26 Allies in Europe or the United States of America or Canada will and must strengthen this Alliance, this very successful Alliance, which is doing—with the West and European participation—all the things I started to discuss in my introduction.

Second remark would be that European integration, including in security and defense matters, is important. But in that area, it's of the utmost importance that, also, that process takes place in complementarity with NATO and without duplication. That's important for NATO; it's important for European Union. That's why I want this wide NATO-EU agenda that's relevant. European integration is a great process, and I always say I'm an Atlanticist and I'm European. But here is the point, where we are now standing in NATO Headquarters, where we see the primary forum for transatlantic security co-operation, and we'll do that at 26 and not at 24 plus 2 or 25 plus one.

Thank you very much.

President Bush. Now we're finished. [Laughter]

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 2:45 p.m. in the Joseph Luns Press Theatre at NATO Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred

to President Viktor Yushchenko of Ukraine; President Jacques Chirac of France; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany. He also referred to Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), a component of NATO's International Security Assistance Force operating in Afghanistan.

Joint Statement by the United States and the European Union: Announcement on Iraq Conference *February 22, 2005*

The United States and Europe stand together in support of the Iraqi people and the new Iraqi government which will soon come into being. To that end, should the new Iraqi government request it, the United States and the European Union are prepared to co-host an international conference to provide a forum to encourage and coordinate international support for Iraq.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

The President's News Conference With European Union Leaders in Brussels

February 22, 2005

President Juncker. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. As heads of state and government of the European Union, we've been very happy to welcome the U.S. President, Mr. George Bush, to the heart of the European institutions. And once again, I would like to thank him for this visit and for the fact that he has taken the initiative of coming to Europe so soon after his Inauguration for his second term as President of the United States.

In the course of our discussions, we have touched on a whole range of issues, which it is clearly impossible for me—[inaudible]—that wasn't me; that was the microphone—[laughter]—a whole series of issues which we cannot summarize here. What I would say is that what we have established is that, as so often in our past, if we work together, if we pool our strengths, we as Europeans and Americans can make the difference. We have

the strength; we have the legitimacy; and we have the means—because we have the same ambitions for the world, ambition of democracy, of freedom, of fighting together against terrorism, the ambition to end the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

On our flags, we have the words “freedom” and “democracy.” And we recognize the obligations that result from this, the fight against poverty, the fight against underdevelopment. And so, in a very studious, constructive, and friendly atmosphere, we addressed a number of issues.

Middle East: We both do consider that peace prospects are better than they have been for a long time, and we are looking forward to cooperate in close partnership with the U.S. and with other Quartet members. It is of crucial importance, we do think, to go back to the implementation of the roadmap. In Gaza, we do all hope and prospect for a negotiated, two-state solution as defined in this roadmap. That means that we have to make sure for Israel that peace, security, and recognition by all countries in the region are guaranteed. And that means for the Palestinians that they have the right to have a viable, democratic, independent, and totally contiguous state.

As regards Iraq, we applauded the courage of the Iraqi people and the results of recent Iraqi elections as far as the out-turn was concerned. We are pursuing our common engagement in Iraq. The United States and the U.S. stand together in support of the Iraqi people and the new Iraqi Government, which will soon come into action. To that end, should the new Iraqi Government request it, the United States and European Union are prepared to cohost an international conference to provide a forum to encourage and coordinate international support for Iraq.

We spoke at length about the Middle East and in particular about Lebanon—Lebanon, this country which is lurching from misfortune to misfortune, from tragedy to tragedy. And we condemned vigorously the assassination of the former Prime Minister. We insisted on full compliance and immediate compliance with the Security Council resolution, and we, the U.S. and the European

Union, have called for a joint committee of investigation.

[*Inaudible*—discussed, I leave this to the President of the U.S.

George.

President Bush. Mr. Prime Minister, thanks. Jose, it's good to see you, sir; thank you. I'm looking forward to having dinner with you and Javier Solana and Jean-Claude tonight.

Listen, it's an honor to be here. I appreciate the invitation. You called an extraordinary meeting, and I'm honored you did so. My first trip after my Inauguration was to Europe, and that's the way it should be because Europe and the United States are close friends.

In my talk to the leaders in the room, I started by saying this: There should be no doubt in your mind that my Government and the United States wants the European project to succeed. It's in our interests that Europe be strong. It's in our interests that the European Union work out whatever differences there are and become a continued, viable, strong partner. It's in our interests for commercial reasons; we trade a lot. And I talked about the need to continue trade and to work out our disputes in a sensible way.

It's in our interests because the values that caused the European Union to exist in the first place, the values of human rights and human dignity and freedom, are the same values we share. And we have an opportunity to work together to spread those values. We talked about Iraq, and I appreciate the contributions and the new suggestion. I appreciate your contributions in Afghanistan.

We talked about how hopeful the Middle Eastern peace situation looks. And I told the leaders that my Government will be very much involved in the process. We believe peace is within reach. Therefore, I want to work with the European Union to achieve that objective.

We talked about aid, the need to work together to fight disease like HIV/AIDS, which we are doing and will continue to do.

I brought up global warming. I said that the Kyoto debate is beyond us, as far as I'm concerned; now is the time to focus on our abilities and research and capacity to develop technologies to make the air cleaner so that

our people can have the standard of living they expect, at the same time that we're good stewards of the Earth.

So it was a very optimistic, hopeful meeting. I appreciate so very much the hospitality of the leaders, and I'm anxious to continue our dialog after this press conference.

President Juncker. Jose Manuel.

President Durao Barroso. Thank you. I think that, on behalf of the European Commission, that the visit of President Bush is really a very, very important one. Europe and America have reconnected. This visit has highlighted all that unites Europe and America. It has focused the eyes of the world on all that we share. I believe that the relationship between the United States and Europe is the world's strongest, most comprehensive and strategically important partnership. The United States, a united Europe—this is really the indispensable partnership.

If you look at the scale of the challenges ahead, like terrorism, poverty, one thing is certain: These are not challenges that any nation can tackle alone. Europe knows that; the United States know that. Even working together, it's not sure that we will solve these problems because of their magnitude. But we must try, and I believe that together, we will prevail. The reality is that the world is safer and more prosperous when Europe and America work together as global partners.

Today we have had opportunity to discuss many of the challenges on the transatlantic agenda, on the Middle East, on transatlantic trade. There is a common outlook on many fronts. I believe that the European Union and America will be very strong partners in supporting the efforts of Israel and the Palestinian Authority to move towards a lasting peace in the Middle East. We know that President Bush and America are fully engaged. There is a unique opportunity for peacemaking.

The European Union and the United States are committed to continue to bring prosperity and solidarity across the broader Middle East, building, on the Europe Union's side, on the decade of dialog and assistance through the Barcelona process.

On Iraq, the Commission is and will remain committed to a stable and democratic country. We will continue to offer substantial

political and financial support for the process of democratic transition. And we hope that if the new Iraqi Government makes a concrete proposal for joint action, we'll be ready to assist.

We also have a shared commitment to development, and I would add that we must measure ourselves by results, helping countries to progress towards the Millennium goals. We must give urgent attention to Africa. We need a quantum leap in terms of resources and policy.

We'll talk later about how we can work together also to fight climate change. The United States and Europe, I think I can say this, agree that climate change constitutes a major challenge. Now, we need to develop new methods of working together to get results that are effective over the long term. President Bush mentioned, for instance, the prospects offered now by new technologies. We are very much wishing to work together with the United States in that field.

The United States and Europe are the two largest economies in the world. We are determined to deepen the transatlantic economic partnership. Trade and investment are the bedrock of transatlantic relations. We want to build on this. Our common objective must be to remove obstacles to transatlantic trade and investment as well as making a success of Doha development round, which is a catalyst for global growth. Europe is committed to promote growth and jobs through knowledge, innovation, and opportunity. That is what the Lisbon agenda stands for.

This visit has given new life to the partnership between Europe and United States. I believe that transatlantic relations have turned a corner. A new listening partnership is emerging. The challenge now is to turn this new spirit into reality and show the world we are able to translate it into concrete results.

President Juncker. Thank you. So, well take three or four questions, two coming from the European side, two from the U.S. side. [*Inaudible*]*—please.*

European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. [*Inaudible*]*—a question to U.S. President and to Prime Minister of Luxembourg.*

This EU-U.S. summit fueled speculation that there will be now two transatlantic tracks on foreign and security policy. One is the good old NATO and then the other one is the new one that's direct EU-U.S. strategic talk. So is this meeting between EU and U.S., this special summit, a kind of historic foundation of a new second track outside of NATO on EU-U.S. relations?

President Juncker. I always wanted to make history, but I don't think that this time—[laughter]—is the moment for doing so. We have an ongoing transatlantic dialog inside NATO. It can be improved, and we discussed this this morning together with the President. And we have an ongoing transatlantic dialog inside the framework between U.S. and European Union. We'll have another summit by the end of this semester in June in Washington, where we are trying to deliver as concrete results as possible, on the basis of the good atmosphere we laid down in the course of this meeting.

We shouldn't make a distinction between NATO and between the European Union. These are two different things, but there are strong family relations and links between the two. This is not a question or/or; it is a question and/and.

President Bush. I agree. I mean, I don't view these two meetings as mutually exclusive meetings. I think they're both important; they're both a part of an important dialog with Europe. NATO was set up for security matters. The EU is set up as a way to make Europe function better, to be able to achieve objectives for her people. And the United States looks forward to working with Europe both within NATO and as the European Union.

I've been meeting with the European Union a lot since I've been the President. This isn't the first meeting—your question kind of made it sound like, “He finally showed up and met.” This isn't the first time we've met with the European Union in my Presidency. As a matter of fact, we do so on an annual basis, and I look forward to the meetings. And they're constructive, and they're important.

Plante [Bill Plante, CBS News].

Democracy in Russia

Q. Mr. President, the Russians seem to be pushing back against some of the things that you've said, Mr. President. Their Ambassador to the U.S. wrote today that “there cannot . . . be a sole standard for democracy.” So what I'm asking is just how flexible you think the standards for democracy can be.

President Bush. First, we've got a constructive relationship with Russia, and that's important. I've got a very good personal relationship with President Putin, and that's important. And it's important because it enables me and our country to remind President Putin that democracies are based upon rule of law and the respect for human rights and human dignity and a free press—you'll be happy to hear. And that—a constructive relationship allows me to remind him that I believe Russia is a European country, and European countries embrace those very same values that America embraces. And I'm looking forward to continuing my dialog with him.

President Juncker. Next European question. [Laughter]

President Bush. I see you wanted to ask a question, yes.

Iran/Upcoming London Meeting on the Middle East

Q. A question for President Bush. President, you came to Europe with a very constructive speech, and, indeed, you said very few things the Europeans couldn't agree with. But actions speak louder, so do you actually commit to taking more into account the European's positions on international matters? And do you actually commit to, for instance, prevent from launching action, strikes against a sovereign member state, state like Iran, without a mandate from the United Nations Security Council?

President Bush. I—You know, look, I'm—let me talk about Iran. That's a place where I'm getting good advice from European partners. After all, Great Britain, Germany, and France are negotiating with the ayatollahs to achieve a common objective, something that we all want, and that is for them not to have a nuclear weapon. It's in our interests for them not to have a nuclear weapon. It's also in our interests for them

not to continue funding terrorist organizations like Hezbollah, which has the desire to stop the Middle East peace process from going forward. And so these are great interlocutors on behalf of the position we share. So there's an example of concrete action.

I'm also looking forward to working with our European partners on the Middle Eastern peace process. Tony Blair is hosting a very important meeting in London, and that is a meeting at which President Abbas will hear that the United States and the EU is desirous of helping this good man set up a democracy in the Palestinian territories, so that Israel will have a democratic partner in peace. I laid out a vision—the first U.S. President to do so—which said that our vision is two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace. That is the goal. And I look forward to working concretely with our European friends and allies to achieve that goal.

And finally, this notion that the United States is getting ready to attack Iran is simply ridiculous. And having said that, all options are on the table. [*Laughter*]

Bob [Bob Deans, Cox Newspapers].

Democracy in Russia

Q. Mr. President, I wanted to follow up on Plante's question, if I could. I wanted to follow up on——

President Bush. Is this a question on Russia?

Q. Sir?

President Bush. This is a question on Russia?

Q. Yes, sir.

President Bush. Okay.

Q. Do you believe, sir, that Russia is backsliding in its march toward democracy? What troubles you the most about that, and how is that going to shape your conversation with President Putin in 2 days from now?

President Bush. I like a country with a free press—an independent, free press. And there has been some moves where the Russian Government, I guess, for better use of the word, didn't license certain members of the press. I think it's very important that President Putin hear not only from me in a private way, which he will, but also hear some of the concerns that I heard around the table today. There were some concerns

from the Baltic nations. And I look forward to carrying their message that it's very important for President Putin to make very clear why he's made some of the decisions he's made and as well as respect his neighbors.

And I'm confident that can be done in a cordial way. It's important for us to keep a constructive relationship with Russia. We've got a lot to do together. We've got a lot of common projects that will make people more secure around the world, one of which is to make sure that nuclear stockpiles are safeguarded. I look forward to talking to him about that. But I also will remind him that the United States believes strongly in democratic values.

Thank you.

President Juncker. That was it. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 6:58 p.m. at the Justus Lipsius Building. The President met with Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker of Luxembourg, in his capacity as President of the European Council; President Jose Manuel Durao Barroso of the European Commission; and Secretary General Javier Solana of the European Council. President Juncker made a portion of his remarks in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. In his remarks, President Bush referred to President Vladimir Putin of Russia; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority. President Juncker referred to former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri of Lebanon, who was assassinated on February 14 in Beirut. A reporter referred to Russia's Ambassador to the U.S. Yuriy Viktorovich Ushakov.

Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany in Mainz, Germany

February 23, 2005

Gerhard, before I raise my imaginary glass—[*laughter*—I do want to thank you for your hospitality. You and Doris have been very kind to Laura and me, and we appreciate that. I want to thank all the folks who have come to say hello from around this great country. It means a lot to both of us that you're here.

You know, in the course of my political career, I've often been accused of following

in my father's footsteps. I don't know why people say that. [Laughter] I'm proud to be here, 16 years after he was here. I hope he brought my mother because, like me, we both married above ourselves. [Laughter] I'm proud to be traveling with Laura.

The first trip I took since my second inauguration was to Europe, because Europe is a vital relationship for the United States of America. It is in my Nation's interest that Europe be strong. We want a strong partner for peace and freedom. We can't have good, strong relations with Europe if we don't have good relations with Germany. This great nation is the heart of Europe.

My trip today should say to the people of this good country and my country that past disagreements are behind us, and we're moving forward for the good of mankind. And that shouldn't be a surprise to people, because we believe in human rights and human dignity and the worth of every individual.

And so today I come to Germany to raise my imaginary glass to our friendship, our relationship, our ability to work together, and for freedom and peace. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:58 a.m. in the Grosser Saal Lobby of the Electoral Palace. In his remarks, he referred to Doris Schroeder-Koepf, wife of Chancellor Schroeder. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Chancellor Schroeder.

The President's News Conference With Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany in Mainz

February 23, 2005

Chancellor Schroeder. Thank you very much, indeed, ladies and gentlemen. I'm very pleased, indeed, about this opportunity of welcoming President Bush and his wife, Laura, here in Germany. I think Mainz is an excellent venue for this meeting.

We had a very, very intense discussion, and we basically covered each and every subject that is a high-ranking one on the international political agenda today.

Now, before I go into any kind of detail, let me begin by sharing with you that we

find it very important, sir, that you take note of one aspect that is important for both of us. We also talked about climate problems that we have worldwide, and this is an area where we also need a solution. You know we have different—or used to have different opinions about how to go about these things. The Kyoto Protocol was not appreciated by everybody, and that is something that has continued to exist. But I would like to emphasize that, despite that, we would like to see practical cooperation with the reduction of problems in this area. And we think that there could be room for maneuver, particularly in the field of technology, where the United States of America and Germany both have tremendous know-how, and we would like to deepen cooperation in this field, irrespective of the question of whether Kyoto is the right tool to be going about things or not. And that is something we have first said, and this is a piece of progress that you must not underestimate.

Now, over and above that, we obviously talked about all of the international problems on the agenda. Some of those problems have already been addressed yesterday in Brussels. I have to say it is good and it is right, and I think it is important for the development of peace in the world that President Bush's administration and he, himself, personally, have committed themselves to the situation of the Middle East peace process.

I think there is hope today and even more than hope, possibly, that we will come to a solution here. And a solution can only ever be mentioned and conceived if there is a strong involvement of the United States of America.

Now, obviously, the other members of the Quartet can be helpful. They want to be helpful; there can be no doubt. The same goes for us too. But I am very pleased that there is now this very strong commitment of the U.S. Americans to this specific problem.

Now, we obviously talked about Iraq as well, and here, especially, we talked about what the perspective can be for the future. And nobody wants to conceal that we had different opinions about these things in the past, but that is the past, as I just said. And now our joint interest is that we come to a

stable, democratic Iraq. Germany was certainly involved when it was about waiving debt for Iraq. You know that at the time we addressed this subject in New York. We have committed ourselves, and it was a success. We would like to see a situation where Iraq can use its financial scope for reconstruction and doesn't have to use the money on debt servicing. And what the Paris Club achieved was, I think, a great achievement.

Now, secondly, we are ready, and when people like us say we're ready, we are ready and we do do something. We're actually doing already; we are training policemen and military security staff for Iraq in the United Arab Emirates, and there I think we can modestly say it is a rather successful project indeed. And all of that is, obviously, trying to arrange for more homegrown Iraqi security. And we are very much interested in not just continuing with these things but to also expand on those activities.

Now, what we do not want to do in Iraq has been accepted, and we then said we'd be very happy to make expertise available when it is about the rebuilding of democratic institutions, be it questions of drafting a constitution but also the establishment of ministries, for example. Germany has a host of experience with these things, and if the new Iraqi Government wishes us to do so, we'd be most pleased to oblige.

Now, the discussion about Iran took quite a bit of space during our meeting, and let me say openly and frankly that regarding the targets that we are trying to achieve, we are fully congruous; that is to say we absolutely agree that Iran must say no to any kind of nuclear weapon, full stop. That is the joint target that Europeans uphold as much as the U.S. Americans, and we are very much of the opinion that this is the target that needs to be achieved through a diplomatic negotiating path, if at all possible. But this means there needs to be movement on both sides.

Now, we very much assume that this opportunity is there, and I very much am pleased to see that the activities undertaken by the three European powers—Great Britain, France, and Germany—find the support of the U.S. American President. And we very much agree that the targets we're going for is very much agreed: Iran must not have any

nuclear weapons. They must waive any right to the production thereof, and they must renounce the right to even close the fuel cycle.

Now, what has now been—may have done in a temporary agreement has to be nailed down fully and completely and, well, sustainably.

Now, those were basically the topics that we addressed. And over and above that, we obviously talked about the situation in Europe, the situation in Russia, and in other places of our beloved world. All in all, from my perspective, a tremendously successful meeting and a very friendly conversation I'm very pleased about. Thank you.

President Bush. Thank you very much for your kind hospitality. And Laura and I are looking forward to eating lunch with you and Doris. And we're so honored that you would greet us here in your beautiful country.

I am—it's obvious that my—it's—an obvious decision was to come here on my first trip since my Inauguration. After all, Europe is America's closest ally. I said yesterday and I want to say it again, the European project is important to our country. We want it to succeed. And in order for Europe to be a strong, viable partner, Germany must be strong and viable as well. And in order for us to have good relations with Europe, we must have good relations with Germany. And that is why this trip is an important trip for my country and for me.

And so I want to thank you very much for the chance to be here, a chance to reconfirm the importance of the transatlantic alliance, and a chance to talk about important issues. Gerhard went over the issues; I will go over them briefly as well.

First, I do want to say how much I appreciated Minister Schily coming to Washington, DC. I had a good visit with him, as did other people in my administration. I appreciate so very much the strong cooperation between Germany and the United States when it comes to sharing intelligence and to working together to find and arrest and bring to justice people who would do harm to our respective peoples or anybody else in the world. And I want to thank you for that good work.

Secondly, I appreciated your kind words about Iraq and the need for us to put past

differences behind us and focus on the people of that country. After all, over 8 million people said, "We want to be free." And in the face of incredible threat to their life and safety, they voted. And as democracies, we have now decided to help them. And I want to thank you for your contributions. I fully understand the limitations of German contribution. However, the contributions that Gerhard Schroeder talked about are not limited; they're important. Whether it be ministry building or training of law enforcement officers, those are vital contributions, and I appreciate—including debt relief, by the way, is a part of the vital contribution.

We spent a lot of time talking about the Middle East. And I assured the Chancellor that this is a primary objective of my administration, is to help to move the process along. Peace will be achieved because the Israelis and the Palestinians want peace, and our job is to help them achieve that. And I look forward to Condoleezza Rice going to the meeting in London shortly to help the Palestinians develop the institutions necessary for a free society to emerge.

I said in my State of the Union that I believe a settlement on this important issue is within reach. I said that because I believe it. And because it is within reach, it is vital for all of us to do—to work together to help both parties achieve the two-state solution, two states living side by side in peace.

We spent time talking about Iran, and I want to thank Gerhard for taking the lead, along with Britain and France, on this important issue. It's vital that the Iranians hear the world speak with one voice that they shouldn't have a nuclear weapon. You know, yesterday I was asked about the U.S. position, and I said all options are on the table. That's part of our position. But I also reminded people that diplomacy is just beginning. Iran is not Iraq. We've just started the diplomatic efforts, and I want to thank our friends for taking the lead. And I will—we will work with them to convince the mullahs that they need to give up their nuclear ambitions.

I—we also talked about the environment. And obviously we've had differences on Kyoto. Those differences were first made known in 2001 on my trip to Europe. I as-

sured the Chancellor that the United States cares about the quality of our air, obviously, that we spend \$5.8 billion on technology on an annual basis to help develop ways to be able to maintain our standards of living and, at the same time, be good stewards of the environment. And we have a great opportunity to work with a great nation like Germany to share research, share intelligence, and not only to make sure that kind of—I mean, share technologies and to make sure that kind of technology is available for not only our own country but for developing countries like China and India.

And so we have a great opportunity, I think, Gerhard, and I appreciate you for seeing that opportunity as well. This is an important trip for me, and it's—and one of the most important stops of all is right here in Germany. And I appreciate your hospitality.

Germany-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President, when your father, 15 years ago, visited Mainz, at the time he talked about partnership and leadership. Would you give Germany the same role today, a partner to the United States of America?

President Bush. He fondly remembers the trip. Thank you for remembering that he came, and I will tell him that the first question I got on German soil had his name in it. *[Laughter]*

The United States relies upon our partnerships in the world to spread liberty and peace, to do our duties as a wealthy nation to help the poor, and to work on matters such as HIV/AIDS. And we need partners. And Germany is a partner. We share the same goals. We share the goal of a free and peaceful world. We share the goal of working together to convince the ayatollahs in Iran to give up their nuclear weapons ambitions. We care deeply about the fact that there's disease on the continent of Africa, a pandemic in the form of HIV/AIDS.

And so I would call Germany a partner in peace and a partner in freedom and a partner of doing our duty.

Keil. Richard Keil *[Bloomberg News]*. *[Laughter]* Here's your mike. He's a very tall person. *[Laughter]*

Chancellor Schroeder. I see, I see.

Syria

Q. President Bush, do you feel that you have gained any momentum here on this trip this week for possible new sanctions against Syria?

And Chairman Schroeder, do you think that considering new sanctions on Syria is something that you could approve of at this time?

President Bush. Dick, the—I had a good talk with President Chirac on this subject. France and the United States cosponsored a resolution in the United Nations that made it very clear that Syria needs to withdraw her troops from Lebanon.

I will state it again: The position of our Government is Syria must withdraw not only the troops but its secret services from Lebanon. And Syria, in so doing, will indicate the other point that the President of France and I wanted to make, and that is those elections that are coming up need to be free, without any Syrian influence.

And so the charge is out there for the Syrian Government to hear loud and clear. And we will see how they respond before there's any further discussions about going back to the United Nations.

Chancellor Schroeder. I very much share this opinion. And let me also add that jointly we are of the opinion that there must be an international investigation on the death of former Prime Minister Hariri in Lebanon. That is certainly one other aspect that—where we feel we stand united. And the French President agrees on this as well.

Role of NATO

Q. Chancellor, I wanted to put a question to you. You tabled an initiative to NATO reform in Munich. It was tabled in your absence, and you then went and explained thereafter. Could you tell me where you agree when it comes to your ideas for NATO, but also, can you tell me where the differences are?

Chancellor Schroeder. We have agreed that we are not going to constantly emphasize where we're not agreeing but we want to focus on where we do agree. And that is why I can share with you that, regarding the question as to where to go for NATO, we are very much of the opinion—and I've under-

stood the President in such a way that we're jointly of the opinion—that it is necessary to take NATO and the European Union, both of them, and to make them into a forum for important international transatlantic positions, where these are openly, frankly, candidly discussed on a high level. That was very much what I wanted to say at the time, and that is still what I think to this day.

President Bush. I interpreted the comments to mean he wants NATO to be relevant, a place where there is meaningful strategic dialog. And that was very clear to everybody sitting around the table. And the meeting ended with Jaap saying to everybody that he's going to come back with a plan to make sure that the strategic dialog in NATO is relevant. And so I appreciated the spirit in which those comments were made.

Fletcher [Michael Fletcher], Washington Post.

Iran

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Chancellor Schroeder has said that Iran will abandon its nuclear ambitions only after knowing that its economic and legitimate security concerns have been addressed. First of all, do you agree with that assessment, and can that happen without the United States joining the talks with Iran?

President Bush. Yes, I appreciate that. Look, first, let me just make this very clear: The party that has caused these discussions to occur in the first place are the Iranians. And the reason we're having these discussions is because they were caught enriching uranium after they had signed a treaty saying they wouldn't enrich uranium. So in other words, there is a—these discussions are occurring because they have breached a contract with the international community. They're the party that needs to be held to account, not any of us.

And secondly, what we discussed with our German friends and French and British friends as well is a series of negotiating tactics—how to make sure the process moves forward without yielding to our universal demand.

I might add, I believe there's another demand that makes sense as well, and that is that the Iranian Government listen to the

hopes and aspirations of the Iranian people. That's what the German system does; that's what the American system does. We believe that the voice of the people ought to be determining policy, because we believe in democracy and freedom. And so, as we go down the road, we look forward to discussing ways to make—to talk with the three interlocutors without yielding at all on the universal demand that they must give up their weapons in a transparent way. And I'm hopeful we can achieve our objective. And we discussed tactics, some of which have bubbled up, obviously, into the public domain.

And we will continue to talk tactics, to make sure that we achieve the objective: Iran must not have a nuclear weapon. For the sake of security and peace, they must not have a nuclear weapon. And that is a goal shared by Germany, France, Great Britain, and the United States. And working together, we can get this accomplished.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 12:24 p.m. at the Electoral Palace. In his remarks, he referred to Doris Schroeder-Koepf, wife of Chancellor Schroeder; German Interior Minister Otto Schily; President Jacques Chirac of France; and NATO Secretary General Jakob Gijssels "Jaap" de Hoop Scheffer. Chancellor Schroeder referred to former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri of Lebanon, who was assassinated on February 14 in Beirut. Chancellor Schroeder spoke in German and some reporters asked their questions in German, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Joint Statement: U.S.-German Joint Actions on Cleaner and More Efficient Energy, Development and Climate Change

February 23, 2005

Germany and the United States have a history of working together bilaterally and multilaterally to promote strong economic growth, reduce harmful air pollution, improve energy security, and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions through such mechanisms as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Delhi Declaration, the G-8 Action Plan on Science and Tech-

nology for Sustainable Development, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development Plan of Implementation. The United States and Germany welcome the continued work in this area under United Kingdom's G-8 Presidency.

1) Cooperation with Developing Countries

We are particularly committed to working with developing countries to help them meet their own development and poverty reduction priorities, which requires increased access to all forms of cleaner, more abundant, and more affordable modern energy sources, including renewable and efficiency technologies. To this end, we have worked to include major developing countries in our multilateral technology partnerships, to ensure that cleaner, more efficient technologies are appropriate to all major nations and regions of the world. We will broaden and reinforce those activities. We anticipate additional opportunities as we work together to address global environmental, economic and social challenges and opportunities.

2) Energy Conservation and Efficiency

Considerable economically viable technologies exist, and should be encouraged, for boosting energy efficiency in industrialized and developing countries. Progress on energy efficiency provides one of the greatest opportunities for cost-effective reduction in pollution and greenhouse gases and improvement in energy security. Examples range from highly efficient power stations, through energy-saving products, to fuel-efficient vehicles. Innovative future technologies such as fuel cells and photovoltaics offer great economic prospects. A promising new field is the area of nanosciences. They have the potential of offering higher energy efficiency, in particular more energy efficient commercial and household products, including vehicles, through the use of new materials and new illumination technologies. An intensification of our bilateral cooperation in the field of energy conservation, efficiency and new technologies could accelerate our progress. Grasping these opportunities will strengthen our economy and open up profitable markets for our companies.

The United States and Germany also have a joint commitment to the multilateral Methane to Markets Partnership that will advance

the commercial use of methane, a potent greenhouse gas, from coalmines, natural gas and oil reserves and landfill sites. This initiative promises to significantly reduce methane emissions and put them to profitable use as a clean energy source.

3) Modernization of domestic power generation

Efficient and cleaner production of heat and power from coal and natural gas are advanced by German-U.S. cooperation in the Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum (CSLF), FUTUREGEN, and CORETECH. These three initiatives will help dramatically advance cleaner heat and power production from coal and natural gas via focused research and development efforts.

These activities underscore the important contribution of modernization of energy systems to supporting economic growth, improving energy security, and reducing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Highly efficient technologies offer great opportunities to cost-effectively reduce energy consumption, pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions. Germany and the United States will make joint efforts to apply these technologies domestically and worldwide, especially in fast growing developing countries.

4) Innovation for future energy systems

The United States and Germany lead global efforts to develop future energy systems including the use of hydrogen as an energy carrier. Both countries are founding members of the International Partnership for the Hydrogen Economy established by 15 countries and the European Commission in 2003 to conduct advanced research and development in hydrogen and fuel cell technologies. Germany and the United States cooperate bilaterally and multilaterally in the development of hydrogen powered fuel cells use in the transport and stationary sectors. A close cooperation in the research and innovation activities of the United States and Germany for future energy and transport systems, including fuel cells and hydrogen, will be a driving force to make these technologies available and price competitive.

5) International cooperation for renewable energy

Renewable energies should play an increasing role in the portfolio of modern energy systems. Renewables 2004, an international conference convened by the German government, provided a platform to advance renewable energy (e.g., biomass, wind, geothermal, solar, and hydropower) technologies and policies. Both the United States and German governments pledged financial and technical resources to advance development of renewable energy in the overall global mix of heat and power production. Recognizing that a wide range of different renewable technologies offer a variety of possibilities for joint projects on both bilateral and multilateral levels, the German and U.S. governments will work together to fulfill the pledges made at Renewables 2004.

Summary

The United States and Germany will broaden and reinforce their activities in three areas of common action to improve energy security and reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, while supporting strong economic growth:

- First, joint activities to further develop and deploy cleaner, more efficient technologies to support sustainable development.
- Second, cooperation in advancing climate science, and developing effective national tools for policy action.
- Third, joint action to raise the efficiency of the energy sector and address air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions in our own countries and around the world.

We will continue working together and through partnership with the G-8 countries under the Action Plan for Science and Technology for Sustainable Development to enhance these efforts.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

**Remarks in a Discussion With
Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of
Germany and Young Professionals in
Mainz**

February 23, 2005

President Bush. Gerhard, thank you very much for your hospitality. I want to thank you all for coming. This is a good opportunity for me to really listen to what you have to ask and tell me about a lot of things. I'm interested in economy, the entrepreneurial spirit. I'm interested in attitudes about freedom and peace. I'm interested to know, obviously, what you think about or answer questions about policies that I've decided. I obviously know there's a lot of disagreement about some of the decisions I've made, and I'm interested in sharing with you why I made the decisions I have made.

I really want to thank you for your time, and I appreciate your willingness to come and speak to two old guys like me and Gerhard. Isn't that right, Gerhard?

Chancellor Schroeder. I'm the older man.

President Bush. Older man. [*Laughter*] But this is a fantastic moment. This is going to be one of the highlights of my trip to Europe, and I can't thank you enough for being here.

Gerhard, do you want to say a few things?

Chancellor Schroeder. No, you can—

President Bush. Okay, we'll start with the questions.

**Democracy/Upcoming Meeting With
President Putin of Russia**

Q. Okay, once again, welcome. Mr. President, you said in a recent interview with the Washington Times that if people want to get a glimpse of how you think about foreign policy, they should read "The Case for Democracy" by Natan Sharansky. In this book, as you know, Sharansky suggests the so-called town square test—

President Bush. Yes.

Q. —can a person walk into the middle of the town square and express his or her views without fearing arrest or physical harm. My question for you: Did Sharansky's book have influence on your approach toward Russia?

President Bush. First of all, Sharansky's book confirmed how I was raised and what I believe, and it's essentially this, that deep in everybody's soul—everybody's soul—is this deep desire to be free. That's what I believe: No matter where you're raised, no matter your religion, people want to be free, and that a foreign policy, particularly from a nation that is free, ought to be based upon that thought. You know, you can't discriminate. Freedom is not a discriminatory thought, at least in the White House—in other words, if you say certain people should be free but others shouldn't free. It's a universal thought, as far as I'm concerned.

And therefore, our foreign policy is based upon this notion that the world is a better place when people are able to realize that which is embedded in their soul, because in that book, also, he talks about the idea that free societies are peaceful societies; democratic societies don't attack each other. And Europe is a classic example of countries which have embraced values based upon democracy and is peaceful.

And yes, this same principle applies to not only Iraq or Iran or America or Germany but also Russia. And as you know, there's a lot of focus on my meeting with Vladimir Putin tomorrow. As a matter of fact, Gerhard and I spent a lot of time talking about Russia today. He's got a close relationship with Vladimir, on a personal basis. I've got a close relationship with Vladimir, on a personal basis. I expressed some concerns at the European Union yesterday about some of the decisions, such as freedom of the press, that our mutual friend has made, and I look forward to talking to him about his decision-making process.

One of the interesting things about being with a Chancellor or, in Putin's case, a President, is that we share something: We make decisions. And I like to learn from people how they make decisions. They say to me, "What's the President like? Give me a job description." The job description is "decisionmaker." And maybe we can talk a little bit about that later on. But yes, it applies to Russia as well.

Yes.

Energy Policy

Q. My name is Loretta Wuertenberger, from Blue Corporate Finance. Concerning Russia, the Iraq crisis has made quite clear to all of us how dependent we are on the oil resources from that region. And for the future, it is certainly necessary for us all to kind of look for strategies to become more independent of these resources.

President Bush. Yes.

Q. Does this aspect, for you, have influence on your relationship to Russia?

President Bush. That's an interesting question. The foreign policy of our country for years—I'm stepping back; I'm kind of going to branch out from Russia, and I'll get back to Russia. For years, there was this sense that we could tolerate tyranny for the sake of energy. And yet, beneath the surface of that policy lurked this hatred and feeling of oppression and frustration and hopelessness, which lent itself to an ideology of hatred that ended up manifesting their hatred on America.

And let me say something about September the 11th. I think this will help frame the conversation as we go forward. For some, September the 11th was a passing moment in history. In other words, it was a terrible moment, but it passes. For me and my Government and many in the United States, it permanently changed our outlook on the world. Those two attitudes caused us, sometimes, to talk past each other, and I plead guilty at times. But as this conversation goes on, I want you to remember that point of view.

As a result of feeling like—that my main obligation is now to protect the American people and to confront an ideology of hate, we are no longer—our primary objective is the spread of freedom.

The best way to diversify, at least for my country—and I don't want to raise a sore subject here—but diversify away from dependence on foreign sources of energy is for us to take advantage of new technologies and expand safe nuclear power in the United States of America.

To me, that would achieve several objectives. One, it's a renewable source of energy; two, it's a domestic source of energy; and three, it would help us meet our obligations

to clean air requirements. Unfortunately, it's an issue that's hard to get through our Congress. I mean, there's a lot of people still fearful of nuclear power, and it's a debate I've engaged in. It's a subject I brought up in my State of the Union Address, and it's a subject I'll continue to talk about because I think it is a way for the United States to be less dependent on foreign sources of energy, which is good for our economy and, frankly, helps us with foreign policy.

[At this point, the open portion of the discussion ended.]

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:40 p.m. at the Electoral Palace. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to U.S. Troops at Wiesbaden Army Airfield, Germany

February 23, 2005

Thank you all. Thank you very much. Thank you for the warm welcome. Laura and I were in the neighborhood—[laughter]—and we thought we'd just drop by to say hello. Howdy. [Laughter]

It's an honor to be here with so many outstanding soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines from this base and others in Germany. Laura and I are proud to be with you. I'm glad to be with the men and women of the 3d Support Command and the 421st Medical Evacuation Battalion. I see a lot of "Big Red Ones" here in the crowd. I know you've just back from Iraq. I'm pleased to say, "Job well done." It's good to be at the proud home of the 1st Armored Division. Some of you "Iron Soldiers" might have seen me before. I was the guy serving turkey.

I arrived this morning from Brussels, where I was meeting with some of our vital allies in the war on terror. I came to Wiesbaden to meet the men and women fighting on the frontlines of that war. You are carrying out challenging duties with skill and honor, and today I bring you a message from back home. The American people are grateful to you. Your communities are proud of you. And as you defend the cause of freedom, America stands with you.

I also want to thank all the military families who are here today. They tell me the quality of life here is really good—[laughter]—but it's a long way away from home, and it can be lonely when your loved ones are deployed on dangerous missions in distant lands; I know that. You built a strong, close-knit community here. You support all those who wear the uniform, and you support each other through difficult times. The service and sacrifice of America's military families is vital to our success in the war on terror, and your President is here to tell you I'm proud of our military families as well.

I appreciate Major General Marty Dempsey's introduction, and his wife, Deanie. I appreciate their leadership. Today we've got General Jim Jones, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe, and his wife, Diane, with us.

I'm traveling in some pretty good company. I like to be around strong women. I want your men listening to your wives just like I listen to mine. Laura is a fabulous First Lady for our country. I'm proud of her. This Nation has got a great Secretary of State in Condoleezza Rice.

I appreciate Ambassador Dan Coats and wife, Marsha. Dan has been our Ambassador from the United States to Germany, and both have done a spectacular job on behalf of our Nation.

I want to thank Diana DeGarmo for helping to entertain you. I don't know if you know this, Laura and I were raised in west Texas. Three boys were raised right down the street from us there in west Texas. Those were the Gatlin boys, and I'm proud they're here. Thanks for coming.

The 1st Armored and 1st Infantry Divisions are two of the oldest, proudest units in the United States Army. You predecessors fought the great battles of World War II, stood vigil through the decades of the cold war, and served with distinction in Vietnam and Bosnia and Kosovo. And on this day 14 years ago, soldiers in both your divisions spent their final night in Saudi Arabia before charging into Iraq to crush the army of Saddam Hussein.

On September the 11th, 2001, history brought new responsibilities to our Nation, new challenges. That morning, America wit-

nessed the violence and grief that terrorists can inflict. We had a glimpse of the greater destruction the terrorists intend. On behalf of our Nation, I made a pledge: We will bring our enemies to justice or bring justice to our enemies.

And you are the ones who are carrying out this vital mission. Every one of you is a volunteer. You stepped forward to accept the hardest duties in this new war. And over the past 3 years, you have added to the great achievements of your divisions. You are part of the history of freedom and peace. You know that terrorists will not be stopped by negotiations or concessions or appeals to reason. Terrorists must be confronted, and they must be defeated. In this war, there is only one option for victory: We must take the fight to the enemy.

At this hour, brave Americans in uniform are protecting our country and others by hunting down the terrorists around the world, one by one. Since September the 11th, more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's known key members and associates have been brought to justice. The rest of them are on the run, and the world's greatest fighting force is on their trail.

The day our Nation was attacked, I also made it clear that regimes that support terror would be considered equally guilty of terrorist murder. A few weeks later, the Taliban found out what we meant. With good allies at our side, America's military liberated the people of Afghanistan from one of the most brutal regimes on Earth. We destroyed the training camps where the attacks of September the 11th were conceived. We showed the terrorists there's no cave deep enough to hide from American justice.

Today, Afghanistan is a free country and an ally in the war on terror. After long years of oppression, women are participating in that society. Boys and girls are going to school. The Afghan Army and police are securing their country. And last October, more than 8 million Afghan citizens cast their votes in the first free Presidential election in Afghanistan's 5,000-year history.

As our men and women in uniform helped to transform Afghanistan, we also confronted a growing danger in Iraq. One of the key lessons of September the 11th is that we

must confront threats before they fully materialize. In Iraq, we found a threat to the entire world. Saddam Hussein supported terrorists; he pursued deadly weapons; he defied the just demands of the international community, year after year, resolution after resolution. The world gave him a final chance to disarm. And when he refused to comply, he met the might and the resolve of the United States military.

At a decisive moment in the history of freedom, America once again turned to the 1st Armored Division, and once again, the “Iron Soldiers” answered the call. You moved into Iraq in April of 2003, and you stayed for 15 months. You waged an innovative, disciplined campaign, and because of your skill and sacrifice, Iraq is sovereign and Iraq is free.

Before the “Iron Soldiers” left for Iraq, secret police held the population in fear. By the time you came home, you had trained thousands of Iraqi security forces who are now on the job defending their free country. Before “Iron Soldiers” left for Iraq, a terrible regime had decimated the country’s education and health care systems. By the time you came home, you had repaired hundreds of schools and hospitals. When “Iron Soldiers” left for Iraq, Saddam Hussein was sitting in a palace, and by the time you came home, he was sitting in a prison cell.

You have served with honor and distinction—and a little longer than some of you expected. *[Laughter]* Some of you were boarding the plane home to return to your families when you got word that we’d extended your tour. I know that was a trying time. But no change in plans could shake your resolve. As a sergeant I met last year put it, “We’re soldiers, and we drive on.”

In your final months in Iraq, you drove on to seven major cities, defeated Sadr’s militias decisively; you restored control of Iraq’s holy sites to peaceful citizens. With your victories in Najaf and Karbala, you helped the Iraqi people take critical steps toward freedom. And you proved to a watching world that the United States of America will never retreat before a band of thugs and assassins.

The “Iron Soldiers” built the foundation for democracy in Iraq, and to help finish the job, we turned to the “Big Red One.” From

Kirkuk to Samarra to Tikrit, the soldiers of the 1st Infantry Division worked around the clock to prepare Iraq for free elections. Your challenges were unprecedented, and so was the outcome. More than 8 million Iraqi voters defied the terrorists by lining up at the polls, dipping their fingers in ink, and casting the first free vote of their lives. Their courage was noteworthy and inspiring. One voter came to the polls in a wheelchair pushed by her grandson. She said, “I am here to cast my vote. Saddam killed six members of my family. This is the best revenge.”

The Iraqi people have now taken rightful control of their destiny, and that would not have been possible without the 1st Infantry Division. By helping the people of that country turn back the enemies of democracy, you have acted in the great liberating tradition of our Nation. And like generations of soldiers before you, you have shown that America’s military is one of the world’s greatest forces for good.

Together, the 1st Infantry Division and the 1st Armored Division have helped to bring freedom and hope to a suffering people. These units have a few other things in common. They both count on the fearless soldiers of the “Dustoff Europe” battalion for medical care on the battlefield. They both rely on the 3d Support Command to deliver just about everything else they need. In a year of service in Iraq, the 3d Support Command delivered more than 185 million gallons of fuel, issued more than 50 million meals, and logged more than 25 million miles on the road. That’s the equivalent of more than 1,000 trips around the world. The 3d Support Command carried out these duties on tight deadlines and often under enemy fire. Your courage is appreciated by every soldier at this base, every soldier in the theater, and I keep you—I thank you for keeping the force for the fight.

In the war on terror, all of you have taken great risks on my orders, and your service reflects the best qualities of America. You have been brave in the face of danger, unshakable in the times of testing, and generous to those in need. Some in your units have survived terrible injuries, and a grateful America will do everything we can to help them recover. Some of you have said farewell

to some fine Americans. They represent a new generation of heroes, as great as any who have come before. Their example of unselfish courage inspires all who serve, and America will honor their names forever.

The sacrifices you have made will change the world for decades to come. By fighting terrorists in places like Baghdad and Karbala and Tikrit, you are making sure we do not face those enemies at home. By helping captive peoples gain their freedom, you have made a critical contribution to the history of liberty. And that means the world will be more peaceful and our children and grandchildren will be more secure. Your success is sending a clear message throughout the Middle East that the only force powerful enough to stop the rise of tyranny and terror and replace hatred with hope is the force of human freedom.

You are serving in a critical period in freedom's history, and there will be more difficult work ahead. Yet I'm optimistic about our future, because I know the character of freedom's defenders. I know the history of those who have defended our freedom. Fifty years ago this summer, the Soviet Union imposed a blockade on West Berlin. Keeping free Berlin alive seemed an impossible task, yet America and our allies refused to give in. From this airfield, American pilots launched dangerous missions to supply Berlin, and they continued those flights at great risk for 11 months. The heroes of the Berlin Airlift saved that city, and with their early resolve, they helped freedom triumph in the cold war.

Today, America is again called to defend freedom. And once again, our military is answering the call. I have hope for our country and faith in our cause and great confidence in the men and women who wear our Nation's uniform. With your courage, with your determination, and with your skill, the cause of freedom will prevail, and we'll achieve the peace that we all want for future generations to come.

Thank you for letting us come by. Thank you for serving our great land. May God bless you. May God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:56 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Maj. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, USA, commander, 1st Armored Divi-

sion; entertainers Diane DeGarmo and the Gatlin Brothers; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Iraqi Shiite cleric Muqtada Al Sadr.

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda of Slovakia and an Exchange With Reporters in Bratislava, Slovakia

February 24, 2005

Prime Minister Dzurinda. Ladies and gentlemen, I'm very happy that the President of the United States is, for the first time, in Slovakia. This day is historical for my country. I have had very good debate with President Bush, telling him the basic orientation of our foreign policy. I appreciate the role of the United States, doing a lot of things in the world.

I told to President Bush that Slovakia supports the policy of the United States based on advancing freedom and democracy, based on preventing nuclear proliferation. This is why Slovakia supports the position of principle of the United States in many areas, regarding Iran, North Korea. This is why we support the effort of the United States to advance peace and stability in the Middle East and the democratization process all over the world.

I told to President Bush that there are many reasons why not only America but also the democratic world, including Slovakia, my home—we all need to have a strong President in the United States. And I'm very, very happy that the U.S. President is really very strong and courageous leader.

Thank you very much.

President Bush. Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister. I'm thrilled to be here. I have really been looking forward to this trip to Slovakia.

We just had a great discussion. First, I complimented the Prime Minister on putting policies in place that have helped this economy grow. The most important responsibility we have at home is to make sure our people can find work. And the President [Prime

Minister]* put a flat tax in place; he simplified his tax code, which has helped to attract capital and create economic vitality and growth.

I really congratulate you and your Government for making wise decisions. Slovakia is a great example of what can happen when people are set free. And this is an exciting place to be.

Secondly, I appreciate so very much the Prime Minister's vision on foreign policy. I want to thank you for having your troops by our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Prime Minister understands that those of us who are free have a responsibility to help free others in order to make ourselves more secure. I'm so honored to have your commitment.

I told him that the supplemental that's working its way through Congress—in the supplemental there will be money for reimbursement to help our friends with troops on the ground.

I also talked about visa policy. The Prime Minister was very strong about reminding me that he wants there to be a different visa policy, a better visa policy for the citizens of Slovakia. He made the case very clearly on behalf of the citizens of Slovakia. I listened very closely to what he had to say. I told him that we will work with the Slovakian Government to reform the visa policy—reform in a way that conforms with the desires of our Congress, but nevertheless, the Slovakian people should see a different visa policy coming out of the United States because we've now got a roadmap that we both must work on. It won't happen instantly—the policy won't happen instantly, but the Prime Minister urged me to move down the roadmap. And I want to thank you for taking that leadership position as well.

Again, I want to thank the citizens of this great country for your hospitality. I want to thank my friend the Prime Minister for inviting me here in the first place and for extending such a warm greeting to me and Laura and our delegation.

Thank you, sir. Appreciate you.

Prime Minister Dzurinda. Questions were not planned, but I asked Mr. President

that the first visit needs to give an opportunity—

President Bush. Of course they were planned, Mr. Prime Minister. [Laughter]

Prime Minister Dzurinda. One or two questions, please.

Iran

Q. Mr. President, you've talked a lot about Iran in many of your meetings on this trip, and we understand that you did a lot of listening about incentives for Iran, using them as negotiating tools, if you will. And first I'd ask you, why will you not join the EU-3 in direct talks with Iran? And then, what would you approve of as possible incentives? Did you hear anything that you liked?

President Bush. I appreciate that. First of all, we talked about Iran here, with our great friend. The reason why we talked about it, because it's a world problem. And one of the things I wanted to make sure I heard clearly from our friends in Europe was whether or not they viewed the Iran problem the same way I did. And they do. Chancellor Schroeder and Prime Minister Blair and President Chirac all said loud and clear that the Iranians should not have a nuclear weapon.

And secondly, I was listening very carefully to the different ideas on negotiating strategies. We have a common objective, which is to convince the ayatollahs not to have a nuclear weapon. And I'm going to go back and think about the suggestions I've heard and the ways forward. But the key thing is, is that we're united in our—in the goal.

The most effective way to achieve that goal is to have our partners, Great Britain and France and Germany, represent not only the EU, not only NATO but the United States. And hopefully we'll be able to reach a diplomatic solution to this effort. We're more likely to do so when we're all on the same page, and I know we're on the same page on this issue when it comes to a common goal.

Prime Minister Dzurinda. The last one, please.

President Bush. Anybody from Slovakia who would like to ask a question to the Prime Minister?

* White House correction.

Visa Policy

Q. Mr. President, dropping of visa regime is probably the most important thing for Slovak citizens that would like to come to America and get to know your country. And I'm sure that all of them are very interested if you could tell us approximate date, when do you believe that these visas could be dropped? Thank you.

President Bush. Well, I appreciate you asking that. I can't give you a date. I wish—you know, if I could, I would. What I can tell you is that, one, the issue had been effectively put on the table by the Prime Minister and the Government; secondly, that we do have the way forward, a way to—look, the visa policy was basically set based upon decisions made prior to 1989. And so our policy still reflects overstays as a result of people who left when the people of this part of the world were not free. And we need to adjust that. We need to address those overstays in the light of people escaping a totalitarian regime. And we're in the process of doing that not just for Slovakia but for other countries in Eastern Europe. And we want to do this as quickly as possible.

Secondly, something else has changed, and that is the Slovak Republic has joined the European Union. And there is a new history now that that has been done, and that history needs to be included in the process. And so we're working our way through a new set of analyses that we can take to our Congress and say here's how people are—people from the Slovak Republic have behaved since free. And that's very important; that's very important.

It's—I can't predict how fast bureaucracies move. They tend not to move quickly. But the promise is, is that not only the President but the Secretary of State will do all we can to move this forward as quickly as possible, to be able to answer the question you asked, which is a legitimate question. I'm going to speak to this issue, by the way, in the square in a couple of minutes here, because I want people to hear that I am concerned about making sure our visa policy works.

Prime Minister Dzurinda. I'm very happy because Mr. President has confirmed that this problem is a part of his personal

agenda, so I'm very, very happy because of it.

President Bush. It is.

Prime Minister Dzurinda. We will continue on this tour. Thank you very much.

President Bush. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in the Office of the Prime Minister. In his remarks, he referred to Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and President Jacques Chirac of France. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in Bratislava

February 24, 2005

Thank you all. *Dobr den.* Mr. President, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for your strong leadership and friendship. Mr. Mayor, distinguished guests, citizens of a free Slovakia, thank you for your hospitality. Laura and I are honored, extremely honored, to visit your great country. We bring greetings, and we bring the good wishes of the American people.

With us here today is a group of remarkable men and women from across Central and Eastern Europe who have fought freedom's fight in their homelands and have earned the respect of the world. We welcome you. We thank you for your example, for your courage, and for your sacrifice.

I'm proud to stand in this great square, which has seen momentous events in the history of Slovakia and the history of freedom. Almost 17 years ago, thousands of Slovaks gathered peacefully in front of this theater. They came not to welcome a visiting President but to light candles, to sing hymns, to pray for an end to tyranny and the restoration of religious liberty.

From the hotel to our left, Communist authorities watched thousands of candles shining in the darkness and gave the order to extinguish them. The authorities succeeded in crushing that protest. But with their candles and prayers, the people of Bratislava lit a fire for freedom that day, a fire that quickly spread across the land. And within 20 months, the regime that drove Slovaks from this square would itself be driven from

power. By claiming your own freedom, you inspired a revolution that liberated your nation and helped to transform a continent.

Since those days of peaceful protest, the Slovak people have made historic progress. You regained your sovereignty and independence. You built a successful democracy. You established a free economy. And last year, the former member of the Warsaw Pact became a member of NATO and took its rightful place in the European Union. Every Slovak can be proud of these achievements. And the American people are proud to call you allies and friends and brothers in the cause of freedom.

I know that liberty—the road to liberty and prosperity has not always been straight or easy. But Americans respect your patience, your courage, and your determination to secure a better future for your children. As you work to build a free and democratic Slovakia in the heart of Europe, America stands with you.

Slovaks know the horror of tyranny, so you're working to bring hope of freedom to people who have not known it. You've sent peacekeepers to Kosovo and election observers to Kiev. You've brought Iraqis to Bratislava to see firsthand how a nation moves from dictatorship to democracy. Your example is inspiring newly-liberated people. You're showing that a small nation, built on a big idea, can spread liberty throughout the world.

At this moment, Slovak soldiers are serving courageously alongside U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan and Iraq. Some have given their lives in freedom's cause. We honor their memory. We lift them up in our prayers. Words can only go so far in capturing the grief of their families and their countrymen. But by their sacrifice, they have helped purchase a future of freedom for millions. Many of you can still recall the exhilaration of voting for the first time after decades of tyranny. And as you watched jubilant Iraqis dancing in the streets last month, holding up ink-stained fingers, you remembered Velvet Days. For the Iraqi people, this is their 1989, and they will always remember who stood with them in their quest for freedom.

In recent times, we have witnessed landmark events in the history of liberty, a Rose Revolution in Georgia, an Orange Revolution in Ukraine, and now a Purple Revolution in Iraq. With their votes cast and counted, the Iraqi people now begin a great and historic journey. They will form a new Government, draft a democratic constitution, and govern themselves as free people. They're putting the days of tyranny and terror behind them and building a free and peaceful society in the heart of the Middle East, and the world's free nations will support them in their struggle.

The terrorist insurgents know what's at stake. They know they have no future in a free Iraq, so they're trying desperately to undermine Iraq's progress and throw the country in chaos. They want to return to the day when Iraqis were governed by secret police and informers and fear. They will not succeed. The Iraqi people will not permit a minority of assassins to determine the destiny of their nation. We will fight to defend this freedom, and we will prevail.

Victory in this struggle will not come easily or quickly, but we have reason to hope. Iraqis have demonstrated their courage and their determination to live in freedom, and that has inspired the world. It is the same determination we saw in Kiev's Independent Square, in Tbilisi's Freedom Square, and in this square almost 17 years ago.

We must be equally determined and also patient. The advance of freedom is the concentrated work of generations. It took almost a decade after the Velvet Revolution for democracy to fully take root in this country. And the democratic revolutions that swept this region over 15 years ago are now reaching Georgia and Ukraine. In 10 days, Moldova has the opportunity to place its democratic credentials beyond doubt as its people head to the polls. And inevitably, the people of Belarus will someday proudly belong to the country of democracies. Eventually, the call of liberty comes to every mind and every soul. And one day, freedom's promise will reach every people and every nation.

Slovakia has taken great risks for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. You have proved yourself a trusted friend and a reliable ally.

That is why I recently announced a new Solidarity Initiative for nations like Slovakia that are standing with America in the war on terror. We will help you to improve your military forces so we can strengthen our ability to work together in the cause of freedom. We're working with your Government to make it easier for Slovaks to travel to the United States of America. Hundreds of thousands of our citizens can trace their roots back to this country. Slovak immigrants helped build America and shape its character. We want to deepen the ties of friendship between our people, ties based on common values, a love of freedom, and shared belief in the dignity and matchless value of every human being.

The Velvet Generation that fought for these values is growing older. Many of the young students and workers who led freedom's struggle here now struggle to support families and their children. For some, the days of protest and revolution are a distant memory. Today, a new generation that never experienced oppression is coming of age. It is important to pass on to them the lessons of that period. They must learn that freedom is precious and cannot be taken for granted; that evil is real and must be confronted; that lasting prosperity requires freedom of speech, freedom to worship, freedom of association; and that to secure liberty at home, it must be defended abroad.

By your efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq and across the world, you are teaching young Slovaks these important lessons. And you're teaching the world an important lesson as well, that the seeds of freedom do not sprout only where they are sown; carried by mighty winds, they cross borders and oceans and continents and take root in distant lands.

I've come here to thank you for your contributions to freedom's cause and to tell you that the American people appreciate your courage and value your friendship. On behalf of all Americans, *dakujem*, and may God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:17 p.m. in Hviezdoslavovo Square. In his remarks, he referred to President Ivan Gasparovic and Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda of Slovakia; Chairman Pavol Hrusovsky of the Slovak Parliament; and Mayor Andrej Durkovsky of Bratislava.

The President's News Conference With President Vladimir Putin of Russia in Bratislava

February 24, 2005

President Bush. Thank you all. I've just had a very important and constructive dialog with my friend. It's great to see—I know Laura was pleased to see Lyudmila Putin as well. We have had, over the past 4 years, very constructive relations, and that's the way I'm going to keep it for the next 4 years as well.

We've had an open and candid exchange of views and positions. In our meeting earlier, I said, "Vladimir, when we get in here, I think people are going to be very interested in this press conference for some reason; I'm not sure why." Perhaps it's because you're a leader of a great nation, and I'm fortunate enough to be one too. But you can see we've drawn quite a crowd here. So I'm looking forward to answering their questions.

We produced a lot of positive results at this meeting. We agreed to accelerate our work to protect nuclear weapons and material, both in our two nations and around the world, and I want to thank you for that. And I want to thank our Defense Ministers for working on that issue as well. Minister Ivanov is here. He and Secretary Rumsfeld have had a very constructive relationship. Our mil-to-mil exchanges are very positive, and I appreciate that. You and I talked about that a couple of years ago. I think they're coming to fruition, which is a very important way to make sure we understand each other better.

We agreed upon new efforts to fight the war on terror, to combat MANPADS and improvised explosive devices, and I want to thank you for that. Vladimir has been a—ever since the—September the 11th, he has clearly understood the stakes that we face. And every time we meet, he is—we have an interesting and constructive strategy session about how to continue to protect our peoples from attack. He is—he has confronted some serious attacks in his country. I know what that means as a fellow leader. I know the strain; I know the agony; I know the sadness; I know the emotion that comes with seeing innocent people lose their lives, and we have

shared that. I hope we never have to share it again, that common situation.

We agreed that Iran should not have a nuclear weapon. And I appreciate Vladimir's understanding on that issue. We had a very constructive dialog about how to achieve that common goal. We agreed that North Korea should not have a nuclear weapon. And again, this is an area where we're working closely together as two nations of the five nations that are involved with North Korea.

We agreed to accelerate negotiations for Russia's entry into the WTO. I stated that the other day in Brussels. We talked about ways to make—to move this process forward. We agreed to cooperate in the field of energy. I told Vladimir that Secretary Bodman would be our main representative on this issue, and I look forward to constructive dialog—hearing about constructive dialog on energy.

We agreed to work together to find peace in the Middle East. Russia's a part of the Quartet, and they played a constructive role in establishing the roadmap. And now we look forward to working together to achieve peace.

This meeting also gave me an opportunity to share my belief that it's in my country's interest that Russia be a strong and viable partner with the United States. It's very important that we establish not only a working relationship but that we understand that in the 21st century, strong countries are built by developing strong democracies. And so we talked about democracy. Democracies always reflect a country's customs and culture, and I know that. Yet democracies have certain things in common: They have a rule of law and protection of minorities, a free press and a viable political opposition.

Russia has made tremendous progress over the last 15 years. It's an amazing transformation of the nation. And I applaud President Putin for dealing with a country that is in transformation. And it's been hard work. I was able to share my concerns about Russia's commitment in fulfilling these universal principles. I did so in a constructive and friendly way. I reaffirmed my belief that if—that it is democracy and freedom that bring true security and prosperity in every land.

We may not always agree with each other, and we haven't over the last 4 years, that's for certain. But we have found a lot agreement—a lot of common ground, and the world is better for it. Even though we didn't agree on certain issues, if you really think about what we have done the last 4 years, and what we want to do during the next 4 years, the common ground is a lot more than those areas where we disagree. And by working together, this world will be a safer, freer, and more prosperous place.

Mr. President, it's great to see you again. Thank you.

President Putin. First of all, I would like to say that my meeting with the President of the United States has been a friendly one, has taken place in a very trustful atmosphere. This has been a dialog of interested partners, which became clear right away.

In the course of our meeting, starting from the first minutes of our dialog, we had a substantive discussion of the entire international agenda. The President has mentioned the key items in our dialog. We share a position on the status of the Russia-U.S. relationship. It is true that over the past few years, through joint efforts, we have been able to accumulate a unique—[inaudible]—cooperation. We are engaged in a constructive political dialog, and we are discovering new opportunities for joint business, cultural, and scientific initiatives.

It is obvious that Russia and the U.S. share long-term interests, genuine strategic goals, and certainly a great degree of responsibility before our own people and people of other countries. We talked about international security. This reality is not affected by the circumstances of the moment or the consolidation of political interests. Therefore, we can see no alternative to the consistent strengthening of the Russia-U.S. relationship.

In the course of this summit, we have agreed upon specific guidelines that will navigate us through the process of cooperation in the forthcoming 3 years. This has to do primarily with addressing the threats and challenges of today—first and foremost, fighting terrorism. We have agreed to better coordinate our efforts on these fronts, including through the Russia-U.S. working group on counterterrorism, which has existed 5

years. Among the highlighted priorities have been the neutralization of the systems of financing and recruiting of terrorists and work on identifying terrorist cells, et cetera.

We are ready to jointly work on the pressing problem of stemming the illicit trade in MANPADS. Our colleagues today agreed upon this in very concrete terms. I'd like to note that on the sidelines of this summit, the Russian Minister of Defense, Sergey Ivanov, and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice signed a Russian-U.S. arrangement on cooperation in enhancing control over MANPADS. It is important to neutralize the attempts to proliferate weapons of mass destruction.

We talked a lot about nonproliferation. We talked a lot about the situation in Iran, about the situation in Iran—North Korea, and we share a common opinion in this regard, and we are taking a similar approach. We should put an end to the proliferation of missiles and missile technology. The proliferation of such weapons is not in the interest of specific countries or the international community in general.

We have also exchanged our views on the situation in Iraq, in the Middle East. Russia and the U.S. have at their disposal some solid opportunities for normalizing the situations in places where regional crises take place. We intend to actually use this potential.

We have paid great attention to economic cooperation including, as has already been said, the possible accession of Russia to the WTO. We have reaffirmed our intention to continue our search for mutually acceptable solutions of the outstanding problems. Russia is ready for a reasonable compromise, but this compromise should not go beyond the usual responsibilities assumed by countries acceding to the WTO. In the presence of the press, I would like to thank the President of the United States for the serious message that our negotiators noticed in the course of negotiations, a message aimed at resolving all the problems that stand in the way of Russia's accession to the WTO. I'm sure that not only Russian economy but also the U.S. economy are interested in the positive outcome.

We have also discussed the issues relating to Russia-U.S. energy dialog. We've had some progress in this area, some good

progress. We're going to continue this dialog. Some issues have been positively resolved in terms of expanding the operation of U.S. companies in Russian energy market. ConocoPhillips, as you know, has bought a stake in Lukoil, one of the major Russian oil companies. It bought a stake that used to belong to the Russian state. This happened recently, and I'm confident that this will be a success story both for Russian and U.S. partners. Another important and interesting opportunity is our cooperation in the supplies of liquified natural gas. In the year 2010, 2011, a large amount of liquified natural gas can be supplied from Russia to the United States.

Our investment cooperation is becoming generally bilateral. The first steps, but confident steps, are being made by Russian companies that are starting to invest their capital into American economy.

We have also discussed the status and prospects of Russia's cooperation in science, high-tech, in particular, in the exploration of outer space.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I highly appreciate the outcome of this summit. Later this year, we are going to meet a few more times within the framework of various international fora. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the President of the United States, who has accepted the invitation to participate in the festivities on the occasion of the anniversary of the great victory in May—on May 9th in Moscow. This is a natural manifestation of respect of historic memory and the memory of the alliance that bonded our two countries in the years of the Second World War.

Thank you.

Russia-U.S. Relations/Democracy

Q. Mr. President, 4 years ago when you first met with President Putin, at a time some in the world were questioning his commitment to democracy, you reassured a lot of those critics by saying that you had looked into his soul and saw a man that you found trustworthy. You've just listed some concerns here today. I'm wondering if you could unequivocally and without reservation repeat that statement today?

And Mr. Putin, I'd like to ask you to address critics in the United States and elsewhere who saw Mr. Gorbachev and Mr. Yeltsin as taking early steps on the path to democracy and worry that you have reversed course.

President Bush. One thing I—that gave me comfort in making the statement I made in Slovenia was that Vladimir said, “When I agree with you, I’ll agree with—I’ll tell you, and when I disagree with you, I’ll tell you.” In other words, we’ll have a very frank and candid and open relationship. And that’s the way it’s been. There was no doubt in my mind what his position was on Iraq. He didn’t kind of hedge. He didn’t try to cloud up the issue. He made it abundantly clear to me that he didn’t agree with my decision. And that’s an important part of having a trustworthy relationship, a relationship where, when a person tells you something, you know he means what he says and yes means yes and no means no. Sometimes in politics, yes means “maybe” and no means “if.” This is the kind of fellow who, when he says yes, he means yes, and when he says no, he means no.

And we had a discussion about some decisions he’s made. He’s had some interest in the decisions I’ve made. And that’s a very important dialog. And as I said—I’ll say it again—I think it’s very important that all nations understand the great values inherent in democracy, rule of law and protection of minorities, viable political debate. And when I brought that—I don’t want to put words in—Vladimir can speak for himself on this issue, but all I can tell you is he said—yes meant yes, when we talked about values that we share.

President Putin. First of all, I would like to say that we discussed these issues at length, face to face, just the two of us. Russia has made its choice in favor of democracy. Fourteen years ago, independently, without any pressure from outside, it made that decision in the interests of itself and interests of its people, of its citizens. This is our final choice, and we have no way back. There can be no return to what we used to have before. And the guarantee for this is the choice of the Russian people, themselves; no, guarantees from outside cannot be provided. This is impossible. It would be impossible for Rus-

sia today. Any kind of turn towards totalitarianism for Russia would be impossible, due to the condition of the Russian society.

As far as the questions that are being discussed among our partners in the media, I can only repeat what has been said by the President of the United States. First, we are not going to make up, to invent any kind of special Russian democracy. We are going to remain committed to the fundamental principles of democracy that have been established in the world. But of course, all the modern institutions of democracy—the principles of democracy should be adequate to the current status of the development of Russia, to our history, and our traditions.

There is nothing unusual here, either. In every country, these overall principles are embodied in this or that way. In electoral law, we can compare the United States and a number of European countries. In the operation of major democratic institutions, there may be some differences, but the main, fundamental principles are going to be implemented in the form in which they have been developed by the modern, civilized society.

As far as the preceding period in our development, no doubt the credit that can be given to that period in the development of the Russian Federation for the fact that the previous generation of politicians, despite all the difficulties that have arisen due to changes in Russia, they have given the main thing to the Russian people—that is, freedom.

But I believe that a lot of people will agree with me, the implementation of the principles and norms of democracy should not be accompanied by the collapse of the state and the impoverishment of the people. We believe and I personally believe that the implementation and the strengthening of democracy on the Russian soil should not jeopardize the concept of democracy. It should strengthen statehood, and it should improve living standards for the people. It is in this direction that we’re going to act.

Q. First of all, I wanted to ask another question, but we have an interesting conversation now. Therefore I’m going to ask about the following: It seems to me that you have nothing to disagree about. The regimes

that are in place in Russia and the U.S. cannot be considered fuller democratic, especially when compared to some other countries of Europe, for example—for example, the Netherlands. It seems to me that as far as Russia is concerned—[inaudible]—everything is clear, more or less. But as far as the U.S. is concerned, we could probably talk at length. I am referring to the great powers that have been assumed by the security services, due to which the private lives of citizens are now being monitored by the state. This could be explained away by the consequences of September 11th, but this has nothing to do with democratic values. How could you comment on this? I suggest that you can probably agree—that you can probably shake hands and continue to be friends in future.

President Bush. I live in a transparent country. I live in a country where decisions made by Government are wide open, and people are able to call people to—me to account, which many out here do on a regular basis. Our laws and the reasons why we have laws on the books are perfectly explained to people. Every decision we have made is within the Constitution of the United States. We have a Constitution that we uphold. And if there is a question as to whether or not a law meets that Constitution, we have an independent court system through which that law is reviewed.

So I'm perfectly comfortable in telling you, our country is one that safeguards human rights and human dignity, and we resolve our disputes in a peaceful way.

President Putin. I would like to support my American counterpart. I'm absolutely confident that democracy is not anarchy. It is not the possibility to do anything you want. It is not the possibility for anyone to rob your own people. Democracy is, among other things, and first and foremost, the possibility to democratically make democratic laws and the capability of the state to enforce those laws.

You have cited a curious example, the Netherlands. The Netherlands is a monarchy, after all. I have no doubts about the democratic nature of that country. That is certainly a democratic nation, but this is very different from the United States and Russia.

There are great differences between Russia and the U.S. as well. If we talk about where we have more or where we have less democracy, is not the right thing to do. But if we talk about how the fundamental principles of democracy are implemented in this or that historic soil, in this or that country, is an option; it's possible. This does not compromise the dignity of the Netherlands or Russia or the U.S.

Q. [Inaudible]—on some of the decisions he has made on his democratic institutions, or have you just agreed to disagree? And, President Putin, did anything President Bush said to you today prompt you to reconsider some of those decisions?

President Bush. I think the most important statement that you heard and I heard was the President's statement, when he declared his absolute support for democracy in Russia, and they're not turning back. To me, that is the most important statement of my private meeting, and it's the most important statement of this public press conference. And I can tell you what it's like dealing with the man over the last 4 years: When he tells you something, he means it.

He asked what some of my concerns were, and he explained answers. I told him that it was very important that capital see rule of law, that there be stability, there not be any doubt about whether or not—if somebody invests, whether or not the laws change. And I think Vladimir heard me loud and clear, and he explained why he made decisions he made.

But we had very frank discussions about a variety of issues. And the operative—again, the operative statement, the summary statement that I think is important for people to hear in our countries, precisely his opening statement to King's [John King, CNN] question—speaking about monarchies. Anyway—get it? [Laughter] It's late in the trip. [Laughter] Which is, firm belief in democracy. And I appreciate that.

President Putin. I have already mentioned that we have paid a lot of attention to these issues. I get the impression that sometimes the public in the now partner countries do not have the full knowledge and,

consequently, do not have the full understanding of what is taking place in the Russian Federation. Naturally, within our countries, there are people who are in favor and there are those who are opposed to the decisions that are being made—for example, the decision on the new procedure for the election of regional leaders in the Russian Federation.

But those who are opposed are richer than those who are in favor. They have the opportunity to spread their opinion in the media, and we often do not pay the attention to that. I'd like to draw your attention to the fact that the leaders of the regions of the Russian Federation will not be appointed by the President. Their canvasses will be presented, will be submitted to regional parliaments that are elected through secret ballot by all the citizens. This is, in essence, a system of the electoral college, which is used, on the national level, in the United States, and it is not considered undemocratic, is it?

We discussed these issues at length and some of the ideas—I wouldn't say "advice"—but some of the ideas that I heard from my partner, who I respect a lot. And I believe that some of his ideas could be taken into account in my work, and I will pay due attention to them, that's for sure. Some other ideas, I will not comment on. Thank you.

Freedom of the Press

Q. To follow up on the issue of democratic institutions, President Bush recently stated that the press in Russia is not free. What is this lack of freedom all about? Your aides probably mentioned to you that our media, both electronic and our printed media, print full coverage of the manifestations and protests in our country. Our regional and national media often criticize the Government institution. What about you? Why don't you talk a lot about violations of the rights of journalists in the United States, about the fact that some journalists have been fired? Or do you prefer to discuss this in private with your American colleague?

President Bush. I don't know what journalists you're referring to. Any of you all still have your jobs? No, I—look, I think it's important any viable democracy has got a free and active press. Obviously, if you're a mem-

ber of the Russian press, you feel like the press is free. And that's—feel that way? Well, that's good. [*Laughter*] But I talked to Vladimir about that. And he wanted to know about our press. I said, nice bunch of folks. And he wanted to know about, as you mentioned, the subject of somebody getting fired. People do get fired in American press. They don't get fired by Government, however. They get fired by their editors, or they get fired by their producers, or they get fired by the owners of a particular outlet or network.

But a free press is important. And it is an important part of any democracy. And if you're a member of the press corps and you feel comfortable with the press in Russia, I think that is a pretty interesting observation for those of us who don't live in Russia to listen to.

But no question, whether it be in America or anywhere else, the sign of a healthy and vibrant society is one in where there's an active press corps. Obviously, there has got to be constraints. There's got to be truth. People have got to tell the truth, and if somebody violates the truth, then those who own a particular newspaper or those who are in charge of particular electronic station need to hold people to account. The press—the capacity of the press to hold people to account also depends on their willingness to self-examine at times when they're wrong. And that happens on occasion in America. And that's an important part of maintaining a proper relationship between Government and press. I can assure you that the folks here are constantly trying to hold me to account for decisions I make and how I make decisions. I'm comfortable with that. It's part of the checks and balances of a democracy.

And so I'm glad to hear your editorial comment, so to speak, on your comfort with the situation of the press corps in the Federation of Russia.

President Putin. First of all, what do you mean when you say I keep silent—or we keep silent about this or that problem? First of all, I'm not the minister of propaganda. Second, we discuss all issues in absolute openness. As George said, today we discussed this issue, as well, with regard to Russia and the United States. But what is absolutely obvious is that in the United States

there are a lot of mechanisms to uphold the freedom of the press. And as far as the fact that there is some kind of friction between the media and the Government, there is an ongoing debate, an ongoing critical debate, going on. There is a lot of criticism coming from the media with respect to the Government. This is an manifestation of democracy. What you mentioned about the comments in the media of the actions of the Russian Government is testimony to the fact that we do have freedom of the press. Although we're being criticized often of that, this is not the case.

When we discuss these issues absolutely frankly, we, and I, in particular, do not think that this has to be pushed to the foreground, that new problems should be created from nothing. And I do not think that we should jeopardize the Russian-American relationship, because we're interested in the development of this relationship. We are paying close attention to all the comments of the press or opposing forces, but our responsibility is to—in spite of all these problems, of which there are plenty, our responsibility is to positively develop the Russian-American relationship.

I would like to thank the President of the United States for his constructive dialog that we've had today. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 5:50 p.m. in Constitution Hall at Bratislava Castle. In his remarks, he referred to Lyudmila Putin, wife of President Putin. President Putin spoke in Russian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and President Vladimir V. Putin: Russia's Accession to the World Trade Organization

February 24, 2005

The United States and Russia are committed to working together to complete our bilateral negotiations for Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2005. The results of the negotiations will enhance commercial opportunities between our two countries, support economic reforms that Russia has made a priority, and further

integrate Russia into the world economy. Our trade ministers have made progress in pursuing our bilateral negotiations, and we have instructed them to accelerate these efforts.

Russia and the United States will continue to work closely in bilateral and multilateral negotiations to resolve remaining issues in ways that benefit both countries. The rules-based system of the WTO will further strengthen our economic relationship in all areas, including agriculture, manufacturing, services, and the improved protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights.

We will work to identify areas for progress in our bilateral negotiations that will give momentum to Russia's accession to the WTO and to Russia's economic reform program.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and President Vladimir V. Putin: U.S.-Russian Energy Cooperation

February 24, 2005

Cooperation on energy issues remains an area of great promise for U.S.-Russian relations. We will work further to realize the vision for our energy cooperation in all aspects described in our statement in May 2002, including through the mechanisms of the Commercial Energy Dialogue and the Energy Working Group. Accordingly, we have instructed our ministers to continue their energy dialogue, concentrating on ways to enhance energy security, diversify energy supplies, improve the transparency of the business and investment environment, reduce obstacles to increased commercial energy partnerships, and develop resources in an environmentally safe manner.

We call upon our Ministers of Energy and Commerce to develop recommendations, which we can support at one of our upcoming meetings, on how to further intensify and develop our energy dialogue. Those recommendations will focus on identifying barriers to energy trade and investment, promoting initiatives to remove them on the basis of predictability, fairness and law, and

suggesting specific proposals for cooperating in developing energy trade and investment.

We will promote the creation of transparent tax, legal, regulatory, and contractual conditions for our companies' cooperation, and support Russia's pipeline system development, which will create the preconditions for increasing deliveries of oil and gas export, including to the U.S. market.

We are interested in increasing U.S. commercial investment in Russia, so as to create additional capacity for liquefied natural gas (LNG) in Russia, and also with the aim of increasing LNG exports to U.S. markets. We would welcome increased Russian oil exports to the world market and an increased presence of imports from Russia in the United States. We would also welcome expanding mutual investments in the energy sectors of both countries.

The initiation of several concrete projects should be targeted for no later than 2008.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and President Vladimir V. Putin: Nuclear Security Cooperation
February 24, 2005

The United States and Russia will enhance cooperation to counter one of the gravest threats our two countries face, nuclear terrorism. We bear a special responsibility for the security of nuclear weapons and fissile material, in order to ensure that there is no possibility such weapons or materials would fall into terrorist hands. While the security of nuclear facilities in the U.S. and Russia meet current requirements, we stress that these requirements must be constantly enhanced to counter the evolving terrorist threats. Building on our earlier work, we announce today our intention to expand and deepen cooperation on nuclear security with the goal of enhancing the security of nuclear facilities in our two countries and, together with our friends and allies, around the globe.

To this end the United States and Russia will continue and expand their cooperation on emergency response capability to deal with the consequences of a nuclear/radio-

logical incident, including the development of additional technical methods to detect nuclear and radioactive materials that are, or may be, involved in the incident.

We will work together to help ensure full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 and early adoption of an International Convention on Nuclear Terrorism and the amended Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

U.S. and Russian experts will share "best practices" for the sake of improving security at nuclear facilities, and will jointly initiate security "best practices" consultations with other countries that have advanced nuclear programs. Our experts will convene in 2005 a senior-level bilateral nuclear security workshop to focus increased attention on the "security culture" in our countries including fostering disciplined, well-trained, and responsible custodians and protective forces, and fully utilized and well-maintained security systems.

The United States and Russia will continue to work jointly to develop low-enriched uranium fuel for use in any U.S.- and Russian-design research reactors in third countries now using high-enriched uranium fuel, and to return fresh and spent high-enriched uranium from U.S.- and Russian-design research reactors in third countries.

The United States and Russia will continue our cooperation on security upgrades of nuclear facilities and develop a plan of work through and beyond 2008 on joint projects. Recognizing that the terrorist threat is both long-term and constantly evolving, in 2008 our countries will assess the joint projects and identify avenues for future cooperation consistent with our increased attention to the security culture in both countries.

We have established a bilateral Senior Interagency Group chaired by Secretary of Energy Bodman and Rosatom Director Romyantsev for cooperation on nuclear security to oversee implementation of these cooperative efforts. A progress report will be due on July 1, 2005, and thereafter on a regular basis.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Statement on Pope John Paul II

February 24, 2005

On behalf of all Americans, Laura and I send our heartfelt best wishes to Pope John Paul II. The Holy Father is in our thoughts and prayers, and we wish him a speedy recovery and return to the service of his church and all humanity.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

February 19

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

February 20

In the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Brussels, Belgium, arriving in the evening.

February 21

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, at the Sheraton Brussels Hotel and Towers, he and Mrs. Bush participated in a greeting with U.S. Embassy and Missions personnel. Then, at the Royal Palace, he and Mrs. Bush participated in a courtesy call with King Albert II and Queen Paola of Belgium.

Later in the morning, in the Prime Minister's Office at Lambermont House, the President met with Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt of Belgium. Then, at the U.S. Ambassador's Residence, the President met with Secretary General Jakob Gijsbert "Jaap" de Hoop Scheffer of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

In the evening, at the U.S. Ambassador's Residence, the President met with President Jacques Chirac of France. They then had a working dinner.

February 22

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, at the U.S. Ambassador's Residence, he had a working breakfast with Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom.

Later in the morning, at NATO Headquarters, the President had a meeting with President Viktor Yushchenko of Ukraine. He then participated in a meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission. Later, he met with Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy. He then participated in a plenary session of the North Atlantic Council followed by an official photo with NATO leaders.

In the afternoon, at NATO Headquarters, the President had lunch with NATO leaders. Later, at the Justus Lipsius Building, he participated in a meeting followed by an official photo with European Union leaders.

In the evening, in the Berlaymont Building, the President met with European Commission President Jose Manuel Durao Barroso followed by a photo opportunity with European Union Commissioners. He then had a working dinner with European Commission President Durao Barroso, European Council President Jean-Claude Juncker, and European Council Secretary General Javier Solana.

The President announced his intention to nominate John C. Dugan to be Comptroller of the Currency at the Department of the Treasury.

February 23

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he and Mrs. Bush traveled to Mainz, Germany, where, at the Electoral Palace, they participated in an arrival ceremony with Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany and greeted American and German soldiers who had served in Afghanistan.

Later in the morning, at the Electoral Palace, the President met with Chancellor Schroeder.

In the afternoon, at the Electoral Palace, the President and Mrs. Bush had lunch with Chancellor Schroeder, his wife, Doris Schroeder-Koepf, and local leaders and businesspeople. He then met with Angela

Merkel, leader of Germany's Christian Democratic Union party.

Later in the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush toured the Gutenberg Museum.

Later in the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Wiesbaden, Germany, where, at Wiesbaden Army Airfield, they participated in a photo opportunity with distinguished servicemembers of the U.S. Army's 1st Armored Division and their spouses.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Bratislava, Slovakia, where, at M.R. Stefanik Airport, they participated in an arrival ceremony.

The President announced his intention to nominate William Cobey to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations: Peter F. Baranay; James G. Berges; JoAnn Brouillette; Thomas J. Donohue; Calvin M. Dooley; Jennifer Dunn; Edward Charles Emma; John Engler; William Eldridge Frenzel; Allen E. Gant, Jr.; Nicholas Giordano; Terry D. Growcock; Herbert Fisk Johnson; Scott Klug; Charles Edward Kruse; Larry A. Liebenow; Tracy Mullin Moroney; James Winston Morrison; Edward Joseph Perkins; Kevin Barney Rollins; Lea N. Soupata; Jose Antonio Villamil; Joseph P. Ward; Wythe Willis Willey; and Wendell L. Willkie II.

The President announced his intention to designate Harvey S. Rosen as Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers.

February 24

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, at the Radisson SAS Carlton Hotel, he and Mrs. Bush participated in a greeting with U.S. Embassy personnel.

Later in the morning, at the Presidential Palace, the President met with President Ivan Gasparovic of Slovakia. Later, in the Prime Minister's Office, he met with Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda of Slovakia.

Later in the morning, at the Slovak National Theater, the President participated in a greeting with Champions of Freedom. Later, at the Treasures Museum of Bratislava

Castle, he met with President Vladimir Putin of Russia.

In the evening, at Bratislava Castle, the President participated in a photo opportunity with President Gasparovic, Prime Minister Dzurinda, Speaker of the National Council of the Slovak Republic Pavol Hrusovsky, and President Putin.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

The President declared an emergency in Nevada and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by record and/or near record snow on January 6–10.

February 25

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The President announced his intention to nominate Nancy Ann Nord to be a Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Christopher J. Hanley to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

The President announced his intention to appoint James C. Langdon, Jr., as a member of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board and, upon appointment, to designate him as Chairman of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board and Chairman of the Intelligence Oversight Board.

The President announced his intention to designate Grover Whitehurst as Acting Commissioner of Education Statistics at the Department of Education.

The President announced his designation of the following individuals as members of the Presidential delegation to attend the Inauguration of President Tabare Vazquez of Uruguay on March 1: Elaine L. Chao (head of delegation), Martin J. Silverstein, and Marilyn Ware.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released February 20

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan and background briefing by a senior administration official on the President's visit to Europe

Excerpts of the President's speech at Concert Noble, Brussels, Belgium (advance text)

Released February 22

Statement by the Press Secretary: South Africa

Released February 23

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan and background briefing by a senior administration official on the President's visit to Germany

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley on the President's visit to Germany

Statement by the Press Secretary: Condolences for the Victims of the Earthquake in Iran

Released February 24

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Nevada

U.S.-Russia joint fact sheet: Bratislava Initiatives

Acts Approved by the President

NOTE: No acts approved by the President were received by the Office of the Federal Register during the period covered by this issue.